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EDITORIAL

DEMOCRATS ADRIFT

For decades, the Democrats won elections by running against Herbert Hoover. Now, incredibly, they are getting ready to run against Franklin D. Roosevelt and all his works. The astonishing thing is that they have chosen to engage in such a self-destructive exercise just when they have in the White House a President who reveres Hoover's predecessor, Calvin Coolidge (which Hoover did not).

Discount the labels if you will, but it's the rare Democrat who today calls himself "liberal." The Democrats say they are struggling for "the middle ground," an area supposed to be occupied by an electoral majority. At least that's where the Reaganites like to think they are when they call their politics "conservative." The truth is that they are radical reactionaries, turning over the business of America to monstrously swollen corporations with less sense than ever of acting in the public good.

Democratic conclaves are full of talk about rethinking policies, updating programs, winnowing the chaff from the past and so on. But the party's attacks on the Republicans' benighted initiatives of abandonment lack point and resonance. The leadership, if it can be called that, can't bring itself to dismiss Jimmy Carter as a disaster and erase his memory. They react to Reagan's giant mistakes routinely, which is not enough. The Democratic National Strategy Council's meeting in mid-October was long on rhetoric and tactics, short on passion and a sense of purpose.

The Democrats count on inheriting the eventual Reagan mess and confine themselves to the calculating maneuvers of potential legatees. This is safe politics but dangerous for the country. America's oldest political party seems set to self-destruct, leaving us with no powerful instrument to use against the foreign adventures and domestic cruelties of the Reagan Administration.

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Stanley Reed

THE VOLATILE SUDAN
Dan Connell

OXY'S BIG BITE
James Rowen

FRAGILE DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN
Lucy Komisar

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INSIDE THE WEAPONS ELITE

THE IRON TRIANGLE

GORDON ADAMS

During the next five years, the Reagan Administration proposes to spend $1.5 trillion on defense—or more than $6,500 for every American citizen. Even if the cuts now being considered in Congress are made, military spending authority for the next fiscal year will probably exceed $220 billion—$1,000 per person.

This huge buildup, which is even larger than what took place during the Vietnam War, will restock and modernize the entire American arsenal from strategic missiles to conventional forces. A new generation of weapons will be introduced: MX missiles with ten warheads each; Trident submarines; B-1 bombers; advanced F-16 and F-18 fighters; precision-guided battlefield weapons; intermediate-range nuclear missiles like the ground-launched cruise and Pershing 2, and the M-1 battle tank.

The tide of spending seems irreversible. The few protesting voices in Congress are drowned out as the pack in full cry follows the Administration's commands to "catch up with the Russians" and "rearm America." The fiscal curmudgeons, those watchdogs of waste and golden fleecings, are out of style, and any proposals of sensible alternatives that might purchase national security at a lower cost, such as the proposal to cancel the B-1 and develop the Stealth bomber instead, go unheard.

The magnitude of the Reagan budget explosion has caused us to lose sight of the workings of the military-industrial money machine, which goes on increasing defense spending in good times and bad, during times of détente and times of confrontation. Save for a few years during the 1970s when the military budget remained constant in real dollars, the graph line of defense

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LETTERS.

BACKYARD AUTONOMY

Austin, Tex.
William Appleman Williams says in "Backyard Autonomy" [*The Nation*, Sept. 5] that the Mormon Church's statement of opposition to the MX deserves more attention, but he still refers to it as "regional resistance." The statement issued by the church clearly anticipated the charge of regionalism and countered with an assertion that the opposition is morally, not regionally, based. They are willing to oppose the MX if it is built in anyone's backyard. The MX is wrong, not because it is to be in Utah but because it is part of a selfish, shortsighted and brutish pseudosolution to a crucial human dilemma. Church president Spencer Kimball not only disagrees with the military about what they propose to do but practically says that militarism itself is the crux of the problem.

Attention should be focused on what the statement really said and not on what it was initially reported to have said. The church is opposed to the arms race, not just to the MX. They are worried about the world, not just the desert. *Matthew R. Sorenson*

San Francisco
As William Appleman Williams points out, people-to-people politics is where the future of left-wing politics lies. We cannot expect to compete directly with the neototalitarian manipulations of the Reagan Administration. Nor should we emulate their tactics, organized by technicians whose deployment of media and marketing strategies has effectively neutralized two major democratic institutions: Congress and public opinion. Democracy is now more of an illusion than ever.

I concur with Williams that our efforts to reach people must first be community-based and personal. That this is possible was proven by Jimmy Carter's successful grass-roots campaign for the Presidential nomination. It has been proven more recently, in the very wake of the Reagan landslide (and in the heart of Reagan country), by the election of a slate to the Santa Monica City Council that was backed by the Campaign for Economic Democracy, a political organization started by Tom Hayden. Theirs was a door-to-door campaign run almost exclusively on $10 and $15 donations [see Maurice Zeitlin, "Tenant Power to Political Power," *The Nation*, July 4].

I urge Williams, his colleagues and all like-minded professionals in every sector to join us at the grass-roots level, on grass-roots issues, whether they be nuclear power, missile sites, rent control or whatever. This is where the influence of groups with strong local contacts, whether religious or secular, can be truly pivotal both regionally and nationally. *Brian A. Unger*

San Francisco
William Appleman Williams's characteristically pithy article, apart from displaying his usual banal prescriptions for the American left, makes one rather misleading and meaningless comparison.

He asks us to imagine what would happen if radicals in a few major states created power bases "comparable" to that which the Mormons have created in Utah. His argument implicitly suggests that the fact that such power bases have not been created is evidence of the "will-o'-the-wisp" attitude of most of the left.

It is simply absurd to compare the situation in Utah, where Mormons dominate every aspect of public life, most notably politics, to the predicament faced by other interest groups in this country.

"Blacks, browns and members of the Sierra Club" are not graced with the centralization of the Mormons. If California were composed of, say, 80 percent lower-middle-class blacks who all belonged to the First Baptist Church, they would probably have a formidable power base. *Then* Williams could talk about the "politics of demography" in a meaningful way. If the American left as a whole were a homogeneous, male-dominated group of white middle- to upper-middle-class members guided by business and agricultural interests (does the Mormon Church come to mind?), *then* Williams could criticize that American left for not evincing "common interest and mutual respect."

Kevin Moore

Berkeley, Calif.
I have rarely seen such depth and persuasive power in a piece as brief as William Appleman Williams's "Backyard Autonomy." Williams devotes his entire article to domestic matters, but there is another aspect of this problem that deserves comment.

The European Disarmament Movement, led by E.P. Thompson and others, advocates a nuclear-free zone from Poland to Portugal, from Iceland to Sicily; it is fascinating to note that Williams favors essentially the same thing, in principle, for different sections of the United States [see E.P. Thompson, "A Letter to America," *The Nation*, Jan. 24]. If North American and European disarmament organizers could see eye to eye on this concept (it is also the basis of the U.N. proposals being promoted by the World Disarmament Campaign), we might see the beginnings of a potent new alliance, cutting across existing political lines in all the advanced industrial countries of the West.

We must recognize that if we are to have any hope of taming the atomic monster in our midst, a genuinely *internationalist* strategy is required.

Monty Wiley

WILLIAMS REPLIES

Waldport, Ore.
I continue to receive letters and phone calls about the article in question, and hence I thank *The Nation* for an opportunity to comment on various issues raised by my correspondents.

(*1*) I thought that I made it very clear that the Mormon proclamation against the MX was placed in the broader context of being unequivocally against the "terrifying arms race." Indeed. A number of Jack-Mormons wrote me admitting that the article engaged them as they had not been involved for many years. They were not walking back to Utah, but they did get the point.

(*2*) I think that Brian Unger probably knows more about the practical implications of my article than I do. I salute him. He is out there doing it. So am I, but he is no doubt better at it than I am. Both of us have changed a bit of the world, but I conclude that he has nudged it a bit further along toward a human and democratic culture. He ought to give us a report. Somewhere down the line we may disagree, but for the moment I want to learn from him.

(*3*) I am not persuaded by Kevin Moore's easy argument. I think that he reads too fast, perhaps like John F. Kennedy (and many others). My reservations about the Mormons are very similar. I do not like any decision—even good ones—being made at the top and imposed on the rest of us. I have a built-in preference for making my own mistakes. More important, for *us* making *our* own mistakes. But when somebody says something that rings true, then I think the better part of socialism is to stand up and say: "*Yes.*"

The politics of demography and socialism have to do with evolving our own conception of the common interest and mutual respect. I think Moore is making excuses rather than offering positive proposals. If we cannot learn anything from the Mormons, then Moore has nothing more to offer than another version of the Moral Majority. More likely a minority.

(*4*) Monty Wiley pushes the argument in the proper direction. Tough-minded American socialists are always accused of being isolationists. It is an easy way to avoid the real issues. Let me risk an oversimplification. A creative and lasting relationship between human beings depends upon a sense of self. Nobody can be interpersonal or international until and unless he or she develops a sense of self. We Americans have no sense of self. Hence we cannot be, and are not, truly international.

We largely define ourselves in terms of the world. The point of socialism in America is to define ourselves as Americans. Then, finally, we can come to terms with the rest of humankind. *William Appleman Williams*

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EDITORIALS.

The Greeks' Turn

Unlike most other publications, *The Nation* did not find the Greek elections "too close to call" [see Christopher Hitchens, "Time for a Change in Greece," October 10]. The evident thirst for a new kind of government dominated the campaign, and thus it could really have had only one outcome. Even so, the scope of Andreas Papandreou's victory is extraordinary. He has a working majority in Parliament and a mandate for a socialist transformation that does not depend on the Communists. Despite the right's compromises with the old monarchist and fascist parties in the closing stages of the contest, it was annihilated. Papandreou's election is the best news from Europe since the French Fifth Republic was effectively replaced in June.

Unlike the French, however, the Greeks will not try to make life easy for the Reagan Administration. They cannot afford to. There are too many issues outstanding between the two countries to permit any quick resolution. For instance, even if Papandreou is prevailed upon to retain American bases on Greek soil, he will have to insist that they pass into the hands of a Greek command. Immediately, therefore, the Pentagon would lose one possible launching pad for adventures in the Mediterranean. Again, whatever the temper of his eventual relationship with Turkey, Papandreou has no choice but to repudiate the Turkish military occupation of Cyprus, a nasty feat of arms with which the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has been altogether too comfortable up to now. And the new government has pledged to open all the files of the junta period to a public inquest, something that can only embarrass those elements in the United States that colluded with the seven-year dictatorship.

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During the campaign, the Administration made no secret of its preference for Papandreou's opponent, former Prime Minister George Rallis. Is it too much to hope that there will now be an ungrudging acceptance of the clear verdict of the Greek people? It was American policy that led to the military coup of 1967, to the aggression against Cyprus and nearly to open war between Greece and Turkey. The Greeks have learned from that, and so should Washington.

Libel Whiplash

The argument is familiar and routinely made by defenders of civil liberties: take away the rights of another today, and your rights may be taken away tomorrow. Though examples are plentiful, it is rare that they illustrate the point as neatly as Kimerli Jayne Pring's libel suit against *Penthouse* magazine.

Pring, you may recall, was Miss Wyoming in 1978. She contends that she was libeled by a short story in *Penthouse* in which there was a character called Miss Wyoming. The real Miss Wyoming and the fictional Miss Wyoming are both blue-eyed blondes, they both wore baby-blue chiffon gowns at the Miss America contest in Atlantic City, and they both performed baton-twirling acts in the pageant's talent contest. Pring's lawyers argue that these similarities would lead *Penthouse* readers to conclude that the behavior of the fictional Miss Wyoming was closely modeled on that of the real Miss Wyoming, including the remarkable sexual feats the character in the story performs. Calling this "emotional rape" by the magazine's 25 million readers, Pring's lawyers persuaded a Federal jury in Wyoming to order *Penthouse* to pay her $25 million in punitive damages and $1.5 million in compensatory damages. The trial judge reduced the punitive damages award by half, which still left *Penthouse* owing Pring a cool $14 million.

Penthouse challenged the lower court's decision and the size of the damages in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. It is in Pring's answer to the magazine's appeal that we see demonstrated the principle that he who curtails the liberty of another may thereby threaten his own.

The editor and publisher of *Penthouse*, Bob Guccione, had himself filed a libel suit some time ago against *Hustler*, a rival girlie magazine. The amount of damages was also an issue in that case, and Guccione's brief on appeal argued that the lower court's award be upheld. Pring and her lawyers obtained a copy of the brief, and, with obvious relish, they quoted lengthy excerpts from it in their own argument before the Tenth Circuit. "Thus sayeth *Penthouse*," Pring's brief concluded. *Penthouse*'s lawyers are thus put in the awkward position of having to rebut the arguments made in court by the magazine's publisher.

While making *Penthouse* pay the same magnitude of damages as it tried to extract from *Hustler* might seem poetic justice, we hope that the Tenth Circuit will not do so. We oppose all libel judgments—and especially punitive damages—as intrusions on First Amendment rights. What *Penthouse* tried to do to *Hustler* and what Pring is trying to do to *Penthouse* may be done to anyone, perhaps even to Pring some day. The right way to protect liberty is to uphold everyone's freedom to speak and to publish. That said, we can't resist exercising our own free speech and telling Guccione that if he has to pay Pring the $14 million, he has only himself to blame.

WRITERS CONGRESS: Watch these pages for excerpts, letters, comment, follow-ups and other material relating to the American Writers Congress.

Self-Containment

The Reagan Administration recently decided to punish Cuba, and the result was a spate of visa denials to Cuban officials, restrictions on the importation of Cuban publications and other harassments. Those White House pipeliners, the columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, explained that the moves were part of "a Reagan Administration get-tough policy against Fidel Castro's growing support for the leftist insurgency in El Salvador." Actually, it is doubtful that they will have any more effect on Castro than similar measures did in the past. But therein may lie their greatest danger.

The Reagan team made its opening gambit last May when the Treasury Department blocked the delivery of 30,000 copies of Cuban newspapers and magazines that are sent to subscribers in the United States. The scholars and others who receive the publications were told that they must now obtain import licenses. As justification for its double-barreled act of censorship and reader registration, the department cited the Trading With the Enemy Act of 1917 and the Cuban Assets Control Act of 1963. These statutes, the department said, apply solely to trade and commerce; in other words, it was barring goods, not ideas. But the action taken against *Gramma* and other Cuban periodicals, whatever its foreign policy ramifications, is a restriction pure and simple on Americans' right to know.

On September 23, three high-ranking Cuban officials —Marcelo Fernández Font, Alberto Betancourt Roa and Richard Alarcón—were barred from a conference on Cuban-U.S. trade relations, under a section of the Immigration and Naturalization Act that gives the executive branch discretionary authority to prevent aliens from entering the United States on foreign policy grounds. The act was invoked again on October 2 against Cuban Vice Foreign Minister José R. Viera.

The danger is that the Administration will turn to even more aggressive measures, which will further exacerbate tensions between Washington and Havana at a time when relations are nearing a crisis stage. Since tensions in the hemisphere are greater than they have been in years, any escalation of hostility could set off a conflict with global reverberations. Thus, this new-old policy of containment, Caribbean style, is at worst a threat to peace and at best a containment of American freedom of speech.

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Inspector's Call

"There's an investigator from the welfare department to see you, Mr. Iacocca." The head of the Chrysler Corporation couldn't believe his ears.

"What the hell does the welfare department want with me?"

"Something about how many color TVs you own. He says he's been ordered to stay until you let him inspect your office."

"Show him in," said Lee Iacocca.

The man entered, produced his badge and introduced himself as James Thompson, Federal investigator.

"Now what the hell is this all about, Thompson?"

"Well, sir, I hate to disturb you, but we're under orders to investigate everyone getting Federal welfare to make sure they're really poor. There's a $1,000 limit on personal property now. If you have too many microwave ovens or color TV sets around the house, we cut off your benefits."

"But I'm not on welfare."

"Not in the usual sense, perhaps. But there *is* that loan guarantee Congress gave Chrysler—$1.5 billion, as I recall."

"That's not welfare."

"Just what I told the poor families I've been visiting, but they don't see it that way. They think a billion and a half is a pretty fair chunk of Federal help. Now, sir, under the regulations, I'm not supposed to take into account your car—you do own a car?"

"Of course."

"In addition to the company limousine, I mean?"

"Yes."

"Hmmmm. I guess the rules would exclude the company airplanes too. But we are definitely on the lookout for color TVs—is that one in the corner, sir?"

"Why, yes—but I need it in my job to keep up with world events." Thompson pressed a button and a panel slid back, revealing a well-stocked bar.

"A bar comes under the heading 'personal effects,' I'm afraid. We used to overlook those, and other assets like burial plots and life insurance policies, but under the Administration's new rules, we can't miss a thing. Do you have life insurance?"

"Yes, of course. But tell me, Thompson, why are you singling out Chrysler?"

"Oh, we're not. Day before yesterday, I visited Lockheed—as you know, they also got a big government loan guarantee. And yesterday I was over at Exxon."

"*Exxon*! You're not going to tell me *they're* on welfare."

"Yes, sir. Just like all the oil companies, they get billions in special tax subsidies. Do you realize that Exxon's chairman has a large-screen TV in his office?"

"Well, I hope you're going to crack down on *him*."

"You bet. I'm going back tomorrow to check a report he's got a telephone in his car. Wait 'til Congress hears about *that*."

PHILIP STERN

Philip Stern is author of The Rape of the Taxpayer *(Random House) and* Lawyers on Trial *(Times Books) and a correspondent for* In The Public Interest.

CENTRAL AMERICA WATCH.

The possibility of a negotiated settlement to the conflict in El Salvador was revived earlier this month when Daniel Ortega, a member of Nicaragua's ruling junta, presented the Salvadoran opposition's proposals for a "dialogue of peace" to the U.N. General Assembly. The Salvadoran F.M.L.N.-F.D.R. coalition had authorized Ortega to announce the offer, which includes a proposal for talks without preconditions between the Salvadoran opposition and the Salvadoran junta. These would be conducted in the presence of neutral parties. The talks would seek to define a "new political, economic, and judicial order" and "restructure the armed forces" by integrating opposition- and junta-controlled troops into one force.

The Salvadoran government promptly denounced the proposal as "intervention," and the United States reiterated its support for elections to be held next March. El Salvador and the United States have repeatedly rejected peace talks, calling them an attempt by the antijunta forces to buy time in order to improve their military position. But Senator Christopher Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut, who went to San Salvador recently to discuss the conditions attached to U.S. military aid, received assurances from high-ranking Christian Democrats that they were willing to initiate "informal, private" talks with the guerrillas.

■ **Although calling for a "search for peace" in Central America, Ortega set off a new round in the war of words between the United States and Nicaragua in the United Nations by charging elsewhere in his speech that the Reagan Administration's fiscal and monetary policies have hurt Third World nations. U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Kenneth Adelman retorted that Nicaragua "lends its territory as a base to export violence and subversion to neighboring countries."**

Despite the verbal sparring, however, neither the United States nor Nicaragua is likely to abandon the search for improved relations, a process begun last August when Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Thomas Enders visited Managua. Enders made it clear that if Nicaragua wants friendly relations with the United States, it must discontinue arms aid to the Salvadoran rebels. The Nicaraguans, for their part, sought U.S. recognition of the Sandinist government as well as the abandonment of policies designed to destabilize it. The Nicaraguans continue to protest the presence of several thousand former members of Anastasio Somoza's National Guard in Honduras and

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UNCIVIL LIBERTIES.

CALVIN TRILLIN

The tip I got was this: The Reagans decided against attending Anwar el-Sadat's funeral not because of the security considerations mentioned by the White House press office but because Mrs. Reagan's hairdresser had warned that the Cairo humidity might "frizz the hair into a state I simply can't be responsible for." Ever since I broke the story that Mrs. Reagan was under some pressure from the White House staff to check into the hospital for the surgical removal of her adoring smile, I seem to be the reporter people call whenever they want to unload some mean-minded little leak about the First Family. Ironically, what I really want to do is to grapple with the big issues, but nobody ever calls me with big-issue leaks. Instead, the sort of thing I spend my time checking out is whether Mrs. Reagan really tried to get the President to fire the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development because he clashed with the new rug in the Cabinet room. It's pretty easy to get typed in this business. It wouldn't surprise me to hear that every time Woodward or Bernstein gets himself really wrapped up in reporting a piece on farm price supports or the reorganization of the General Services Administration, someone calls with a tip about some President committing a felony.

I was particularly disappointed because I thought the Sadat funeral would result in a lot of important foreign policy leaks—particularly after it was announced that Richard Nixon's parole officer was going to allow him to go along as one of the official American representatives. I expected someone to call and say, "Reagan's planning to send Billy Sol Estes to Manila as our representative at the Martial Law Celebrations. Check it out."

"Why don't you ever call one of the big-issue columnists and tell him how much Mrs. Reagan's fur coats cost?" I asked the hair-frizz leaker.

"I tried," he said. "They've all got unlisted numbers."

"Don't you have any big-issue leaks?" I asked. "The economy, maybe, or Middle East policy?"

"Sure, I got big-issue leaks," my informant said, sounding a bit offended. "You want a foreign policy leak?"

"Precisely the sort of thing I had in mind."

My source paused for a while to build up the suspense. "The Reagans' interior decorator has been sitting in on National Security Council meetings," he said. "Also some guy named Adolfo. Check it out."

No matter what is written these days about the romance of investigative reporting, I can tell you that it's no fun checking out the sort of leaks I get ("Let me get this straight now: You're saying, for the record, that the story couldn't be true because in high humidity Mrs. Reagan's hair tends not to frizz but to go limp?"). No sooner had I decided that the hair-frizz story was untrue—the limp-hair denial checked out with some of my sources on the Coast—than the telephone rang again. I knew it was probably another small-bore leaker.

"Forget my name," a voice on the telephone said.

"I don't know your name," I said. "But I can keep even that on deep background if necessary."

There was a long pause. "Let's put it this way," my source finally said. "Do you think it's appropriate for Mrs. Reagan's hairdresser to be receiving Secret Service protection?"

"Is he really receiving Secret Service protection?"

"Check it out," the voice said.

"Wait! Don't hang up," I said. "I'd like to talk to you about some big issues."

"You'll hear from me," the voice said. "I'll be phoning in the morning to let you know about how the price of Mrs. Reagan's new ballgown compares with the gross national product of Chad."

I started checking out the Secret Service tip ("Yes, I know you're busy, but could you just see if one of the people sitting under a dryer near where Mister Marc is working looks like he went to Georgetown and is carrying a gun?"), but I was beginning to grow suspicious. Hadn't there been a lot of press lately about the Reagans' extravagances? Even some of the big-issue fellows were making a big issue about the new White House china and the President's $1,000 cowboy boots. I had begun to spot some counterleaks. Coming to the First Family's defense in his *Time* column, Hugh Sidey revealed that some of the President's $1,000 suits were ten years old—leaving the implication that a President like Richard Nixon would have long ago given such rags to the thrift shop and taken a $2,800 tax write-off. Could it be that Sidey asked his best White House source for permission to sit in on a Middle East strategy session and was instead given a tour of Reagan's closet? ("This double vent was never used by Beverly Hills tailors after 1974, Hugh. You can check it out.") Why?

The tip-off came in a *New York Times* piece headlined "First Lady Tells Critics 'I Am Just Being Myself.' " Is it possible that nobody in the White House knew that this was precisely the same phrase used by Marie Antoinette when she was criticized for throwing squab carcasses at the peasants? I think not. I began to get the feeling that we were being set up to provoke a backlash sympathetic to Mrs. Reagan—and maybe even to her hairdresser. She would be presented as a decent wife and mother who had been gang-slurred by a vicious mob of secular humanists.

"Did you check out the Secret Service story?" my source asked the next morning.

"Secret Service protection for Mrs. Reagan's hairdresser seems perfectly reasonable to me," I said. "If the Commies got to him, he might insert one of those little Japanese listening devices in her follicles."

"How about the cost of the ballgown?" he said.

"The Reagans earned their money," I said. "If you think playing second lead to a chimp is an easy way to make a living, you've never tried it. I wish you wouldn't keep calling with this sort of stuff. I'm more of a big-issue fellow."

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ARTICLES.

EGYPT'S MOSLEM OPPOSITION

Sadat's Killers Were Not Alone

STANLEY REED

Anwar el-Sadat, a famous man, is dead. An unknown soldier is the new ruler of Egypt. As a first step toward assessing President Hosni Mubarak's prospects, I recommend that we ignore his slim biographical file and instead try to understand why Sadat was killed.

The U.S. and Egyptian governments and the media of both countries have provided reassuring answers. First, there was a breakdown in security. Second, and more important, the assassins were a handful of Moslem fundamentalist "fanatics" who were not part of a larger conspiracy and who did not represent any significant segment of the Egyptian people.

It would be a mistake, it seems to me, to overemphasize the failure of security. Sadat, after all, had a cavalier attitude toward threats to his life. He saw himself as "the father of the Egyptian family" and relished mingling with his "children," 99.9 percent of whom, he continually assured us, supported his policies. The soldiers, in particular, were his "sons." He did not need bulletproof vests or plastic shields.

Our attention, rather, should be directed toward the assassins—the so-called "Moslem fanatics." Just how extreme were the views of these young men? Were they deviants, totally out of touch with the rest of the nation? This seems unlikely. Egypt is a much more cohesive society than our own; it has few loners. The young men who killed Sadat acted with coordination and unswerving determination.

The Egyptian authorities have told us that the assassins were members of a Moslem society called Takfir wa Hijra, or Repentance and Exodus. The group first came to national attention in 1977 when several of its members abducted a former Minister of Religious Affairs in an effort to force the release of some Takfir members from prison. The plan backfired. Sadat would not budge, and the group carried out its threat to kill its hostage. A roundup of about 1,000 Takfir adherents followed. Shukri Ahmed Mustafa, the group's leader, and four of his followers were hanged.

At his trial, Mustafa made a lasting impression on the Egyptian people. "I am the Prince, and we will inherit the earth," he shouted to the spectators in the courtroom. He was an awesome figure with shoulder-length black hair, a full beard and wild, piercing eyes. His disciples refused to believe he was dead for weeks after the execution was officially announced.

In 1979, I located Mustafa's widow, his children and his brother-in-law in their native Asyut, and they told me the story of his life. Mustafa spent most of the 1960s in prison after having been convicted of being a member of the illegal Moslem Brotherhood, the precursor of present-day fundamentalist groups. During this time, he broke with the Moslem Brothers, charging them with a lack of commitment and militancy. The savage treatment meted out by Gamal Abdel Nasser's jailers convinced him that Egypt's military rulers had plunged the country into barbarism, and after his release he led a group of his followers on an "exodus" into the barren territory east of the Nile Valley. There they sought to establish a society of purity and justice, and also engaged in paramilitary training. Following his execution, Mustafa became a martyr to many Moslems.

By 1977, Takfir had about 4,000 adherents throughout Egypt, including a few students at the American University in Cairo. Saad Ibrahim, an Egyptian sociologist, conducted interviews with many jailed leaders of the group in 1978 and 1979 and found that 80 percent of the students in the group had matriculated in medicine, engineering, pharmacology and military technology, which meant they had received top grades on the nationwide entrance exams. "If they were not typical," he concluded, "it was because they were above average."

There are many groups in Egypt similar to Takfir, though perhaps not so eccentric, including Jihad and the Soldiers of God. Collectively they are known as the Gamaat al-Islamiya (the Islamic Societies). Their membership is conservatively

DRAWINGS BY J.C. SUARÈS

Stanley Reed is a journalist and specialist on Near Eastern affairs who resided in Cairo from 1976 to 1980.

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estimated at 100,000. In recent university elections, candidates of the Islamic Societies outpolled those of all other groups. Many of the students recruited by the fundamentalist groups come from small towns and rural areas. These unsophisticated arrivals to the big city are offered books, lodging and, above all else, a community of friends. According to Ibrahim, senior members of the Islamic Societies go to mosques near the colleges and observe the youthful worshippers, looking for the obviously zealous ones, especially those who observe the dawn prayers. But only those who are judged "capable of becoming politically conscious" are accepted.

The basic political appeal of the societies is the hope they offer of social change. Many bright, idealistic Egyptian youths have grown disillusioned with secular politics—with good reason. Nearly thirty years after the 1952 "revolution" that brought Nasser to power, the same coterie of men from the military and the upper class is still in power.

The religious societies have the familiar puritanical goals—banning the consumption of alcohol and imposing "modesty" on women, but, surprisingly, they derive much of their strength from economic discontent. They teach that it is the ruler's responsibility to provide social justice and to close the wide gap between rich and poor. Sadat performed inadequately by these standards. His "open door" economic policy catered to businessmen and foreigners and placed a low priority on programs that benefit the poor. To take only one example, very little low-cost housing was built during his rule. As a result, many Egyptian youths have had to delay marriage, and this has created social tension. Tens of thousands of Cairenes have solved the housing problem in a macabre way: they have taken up residence in the vast tracts of tombs east of the city.

Egyptian Marxists offer a far more cogent analysis of the economic system than do the Moslems. But Marxism is atheistic and, hence, suspect. Also, most Egyptian Marxists come from the upper class and are considered part of the elite.

Activist Moslem groups are not a new phenomenon in Egyptian history. The Moslem Brotherhood was a powerful voice for political change during the 1930s and 1940s. With its 500,000 members, the Brotherhood in effect constituted an alternative government. It owned businesses and helped the poor. Members of the Brotherhood considered themselves soldiers "enlisted to spread the message of Islam," and the organization sent its own troops to fight in the 1948 war with Israel. Its goal was to make Egypt a fit place for good Moslems to live, and acts of terrorism were considered justifiable means to this end.

On the Prophet's birthday in 1940, 21-year-old Anwar el-Sadat met Sheik Hassan al-Banna, the Brotherhood's Supreme Guide, in an army mess hall. The encounter led to several meetings between the Moslem Brothers and Sadat and his young officer friends. In Sadat's case these meetings took place over the course of many years, and when he went to jail in 1948 after being implicated in a plot to murder Amin Osnan, the Minister of Finance, Banna helped support his family. Although few of Sadat's set actually joined the Brotherhood, it taught them discipline. Banna's persuasive analysis of Egypt's problems also channeled their inchoate rebelliousness toward specific goals. In a secret meeting at the Cairo Zoo in 1944, an aide of Banna's urged Sadat's colleague Gamal Abdel Nasser to begin organizing cells in the army. This conversation profoundly affected Nasser; as a result of it he formulated his plan to overthrow King Farouk.

The Brotherhood welcomed Nasser's 1952 coup, but Nasser would not tolerate the existence of a large armed

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organization that many Egyptians believed had God on its side. When a Brotherhood assassin fired eight shots at him in 1954, he moved to crush the society, and thousands of its members were sent to prison camps during the 1950s and 1960s. As a kind of public test of Sadat's loyalties, Nasser appointed him to the military tribunal that directed the suppression.

Once he took power in 1970, Sadat rejected Nasser's cautious approach and set about using religion for his own political purposes. He cast himself as the "believing" president and made a public event of his Friday prayers. This was partly to please his early paymaster, Saudi Arabia. In hopes of countering the left, which he mistakenly considered his main enemy, he allowed survivors of the Brotherhood purges to publish inflammatory anti-Camp David, anti-Christian and anti-Jewish articles in their magazines *al-Daawa* and *al-Itisam*. He also played on the religious theme in foreign affairs, portraying the Camp David accords as linking him, a Moslem, to the born-again Christian Jimmy Carter and the Orthodox Jew Menachem Begin.

The Iranian revolution brought Sadat to his senses, but by then the Islamic groups had taken advantage of his tolerance and become a sizable threat. These groups probably regard Sadat's assassination as a patriotic act. In their view he was an abomination. He had forced Egypt into an unholy alliance with the United States, abandoned the Palestinian cause to negotiate with Israel and allowed the sinful night life of Cairo to flourish as it had not done since the time of King Farouk. The final outrage was last month's roundup of 1,536 dissidents, many of them fundamentalists.

The leaders of every political tendency from Marxism to liberalism to Moslem fundamentalism were imprisoned. Even the vice president of the Socialist Labor Party, which Sadat helped found three years ago as a "constructive opposition," was arrested, along with the editorial staff of the party's newspaper. These events confirmed something that many observers in Cairo knew but that the American press had failed to report: most Egyptians no longer admired Sadat or supported his policies. Opposition to the Camp David accords, which had come to symbolize everything negative about Sadat, was widespread.

During the past two years, eighty prominent Egyptians signed statements demanding, among other things, that Sadat "freeze all agreements and relations with Israel" and draw up "an alternative policy to . . . Camp David, a policy that would restore to Egypt [a] pan-Arab liberation line and its leading position." The statements also denounced Sadat's increasingly repressive measures, the growing American military presence in Egypt and the failure of prosperity to materialize as he had promised. Among the signers were two former vice presidents, a former prime minister and nine former cabinet ministers, all of whom served under Sadat.

What will Mubarak's first steps be? A man who knew both Sadat and Mubarak well reminded me that while Sadat only served in the army for a few years, Mubarak was a career officer. "He will play the role of a military man on domestic dissent, stressing discipline," he said.

But police state tactics are unlikely to succeed. "Excessive measures against democracy and the repression of the opposition will only result in more violent action," argues a remarkably bold leftist pamphlet distributed after the assassination.

Egyptians expect their rulers to provide at least the illusion of progress. Nasser, for all his faults, made them think that they were in control of their own destiny and that their nation was the leader of the Arab world. Sadat, until recently, gave promise of political freedom and better living conditions. The high-handed security measures that kept the public away from his funeral augur a period of frustration and violence. □

THE VOLATILE SUDAN

Test Case for a Reagan Doctrine?

DAN CONNELL

In the aftermath of the assassination of Anwar el-Sadat, there has been much speculation about where the next political crisis will strike. U.S. State Department denials to the contrary, the likelihood is that the Sudan will be the place.

The largest country in Africa and Egypt's closest ally, the Sudan is seething with political discontent, and the death of Sadat can only make matters worse. Although the government blames the Sudan's problems on Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi of Libya, their roots are to be found in the familiar Middle Eastern compost of political factionalism, ethnic and religious rivalry, economic dislocation and popular dissatisfaction with the pro-Western policies of the incumbent military regime of President Gaafar al-Nimeiry. The Sudan, described last spring by Secretary of State Alexander Haig as "an island of stability in a sea of turmoil," is receiving one of the largest shipments of U.S. arms ever made on the African continent other than to Egypt.

Most of these arms, which include sophisticated tanks, artillery, jet fighters and antiaircraft guns, are intended for deployment along the Sudan's western border with Chad, where a Sudanese-Egyptian arms buildup has been underway since the beginning of this year. Libya has repeatedly charged that Sudanese weapons have been shipped to guerrilla forces opposing the Libyan-backed regime of Goukouni Oueddei in Chad and that Sudanese troops have been involved in the fighting there. Many people in the Sudan believed that the buildup was in preparation for an assault against Qaddafi.

Senior U.S. diplomats interviewed last spring in Khar-

Dan Connell has spent much of the past five years in northeast Africa. He is now at work on a book, Coming of Age in Africa, *about regional conflicts there.*

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toum, the Sudanese capital, spoke openly of the "need to teach Qaddafi a good lesson." And since Sadat's death, his willingness to attack Libya has been acknowledged. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said recently that the Carter Administration had deterred Sadat from such a move. Now the Reagan Administration shows signs that it may revive the invasion idea, and the steady stream of anti-Libya propaganda emanating from Washington seems to confirm this. The recent U.S.-Libyan aerial battle above the Gulf of Sidra could have been an attempt to create a Tonkin Gulf-style pretext for U.S. retaliation against Qaddafi. Or the intention might have been to provoke the Libyan leader into halting oil shipments to the West, a move that would isolate Libya and, given the current world oil glut, cause it economic distress.

In any event, there is little sympathy in the United States for Qaddafi, and it is unlikely that military action against him would generate much protest here. The problem for the United States, Egypt and the Sudan is more the danger of a regional response from Libya's allies that could touch off a major war that the Sudan and Egypt could lose. Their strongest antagonist would be Ethiopia, and recent developments in that quarter are instructive.

Ethiopia has long threatened to stir up dissident elements in the Sudan's restive southern region because of Khartoum's support for Eritrean nationalists fighting to establish an independent state in the former Italian colony. But in August, the Sudanese government closed the offices in Khartoum of the Eritrean and other Ethiopian nationalist movements, and there are unconfirmed reports that the guerrillas' access to supplies across the Sudanese border has since been shut off. These actions could represent an attempt to achieve a reconciliation with the government in Addis Ababa, leaving the Sudan free to deal with Libya.

Shortly before Sadat was killed, Nimeiry ordered a roundup of "unemployed" Sudanese nationals and political exiles from Ethiopia and Eritrea. Hours before the assassination, he dissolved the country's two regional parliaments. In the days that followed, the crackdown in Khartoum picked up speed, and there were rumors that suspected opposition leaders had been arrested.

At the same time, the war of words between Nimeiry and Qaddafi heated up. Each country vowed support for guerrillas bent on toppling the other's government. Spokesmen in Khartoum also renewed charges of Libyan air attacks on Sudanese towns along the border with Chad. A shooting war between the Sudan and Libya began to seem more likely.

While there can be little doubt that Qaddafi has been stirring up trouble in the Sudan, there is increasing evidence that Washington is making him a scapegoat as part of a strategy to provoke a confrontation. But a war between Libya and the Sudan could become a major regional conflict, one that could ultimately involve the United States and Russia.

The Sudan and Egypt confront Libya and Soviet-aligned Ethiopia and South Yemen. Somalia, on Ethiopia's eastern flank, is friendly to Egypt and a U.S. ally, while Syria is linked to Libya (in 1979, the two countries concluded an agreement to merge). There are U.S.-backed regimes in Oman, North Yemen and, of course, Saudi Arabia, but they are likely to enter the fray only if it is prolonged and widespread.

Keenly aware of this, Reagan strategists appear to favor a carefully limited war against Qaddafi. The battlefield of choice is Chad. The staging area is western Sudan. But whether or not this scenario is carried through depends on a number of unpredictable factors, above all the stability of the Nimeiry regime. That is why emergency military aid is now being rushed to the Sudan, and why more is promised.

Maj. Gen. Gaafar al-Nimeiry came to power in the Sudan in 1969 as the leader of a military coup against a corrupt, Western-backed civilian regime. Initially inclined toward an alliance with the Soviet Union, Nimeiry broke with the Sudanese Communist Party after less than two years. The Carter Administration discovered Nimeiry in 1977 after the Soviet Union had provided Ethiopia, a former U.S. ally, with large amounts of military aid. By then, Nimeiry had narrowly survived a series of attempted coups, at least two of which originated among Islamic fundamentalist groups supported by Ethiopia and Libya.

By no small coincidence, it was at about this time that Chevron and a consortium of other major oil companies announced the discovery of vast petroleum reserves in the southern region of the Sudan that were said to rival those of Saudi Arabia. This find, along with the Sudan's location—it borders on Uganda, Kenya, Zaire, the Central African Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia and Libya—gave it a

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new importance in U.S. eyes. Nimeiry's later support for the Camp David accords only heightened this importance, since the Sudan was the only Arab nation to side with Egypt.

But with the oil years away from full-scale production, the sprawling desert state continues to be plagued by fuel shortages. Flashy agricultural development projects have been mismanaged, and there is constant bureaucratic chaos. These conditions have been exacerbated by an almost continuous outflow of skilled and educated Sudanese to the nearby oil-producing countries of the Persian Gulf.

Adding to these problems is the deep-rooted division between the Moslem north, which has long dominated the economy and national politics, and the Christian and animist south. A seventeen-year civil war between the two regions was ended by Nimeiry early in his tenure, but the conflict still simmers. Every year, famine sweeps through the south, which the government's neglect has consigned to a state of perpetual poverty. Earlier this year, northern politicians redrew the country's regional boundaries so that the oil in the south would be under the north's control. The Khartoum government also decided to locate a new Chevron refinery in the northern city of Kosti. These actions outraged many southerners who had hoped that the oil would benefit them, rather than flow toward the seat of power in Khartoum.

But the north also has its problems—mainly a historical rivalry between the Ansar sect and the smaller Khatmiya sect, and the rise of the Islamic fundamentalist Moslem Brotherhood. The Ansar, under the leadership of Sadiq el-Mahdi, great-grandson of the Sudanese nationalist, align themselves with Libya and Ethiopia while maintaining a long-standing antagonism toward Egypt. The Moslem Brotherhood has links with underground movements throughout the Arab world.

The rise of the Ansar and the Moslem Brotherhood did not pose a threat to the Nimeiry regime until the signing of the Camp David accords. Nimeiry's alliance with the West signified a departure from Islamic culture and a defeat for Arab unity. Though the Ansar and the Moslem Brotherhood have refrained from public protest, both have consolidated their support at home and strengthened their ties abroad.

These internal developments coincided with a rash of crises in neighboring countries, which have spilled over into Sudanese politics. First, there was the defeat of Idi Amin's forces in Uganda, which brought thousands of Ugandan refugees and modern weapons into the south. Then, in December 1980, there was the Libyan-backed victory of Goukouni Oueddei in the long civil war in Chad, and a Sudanese decision to back the rebel forces of Hissen Habré. This led to heightened tension with Libya. On the Sudan's lengthy eastern border with Ethiopia and Eritrea, four simultaneous wars have generated a continuous influx of refugees, many of whom have acquired arms.

And so the situation is volatile, and Nimeiry's hold on power tenuous. Indeed, his country may become the first test of the Reagan Administration's promise to keep friendly governments in power. □

THE I.B.P. MERGER

Oxy Takes a Very Big Bite

JAMES ROWEN

While the bidding war for Conoco, the nation's ninth largest oil company, dominated the business news this summer, another equally momentous merger went virtually unsung. The takeover of Iowa Beef Processors (I.B.P.), the number-one beef packer in the United States, by the Occidental Petroleum Corporation, number twelve in the Big Oil profit parade, was a portent that food could become the petroleum of the 1990s. For Oxy's acquisition gave Armand Hammer's giant multinational, with its collateral holdings in chemicals as well as oil, coal, phosphates and other resources, a controlling interest in America's favorite meat.

I.B.P., which was founded twenty-one years ago in Nebraska, quickly became the dominant company in the meat-processing industry. Its strong suit was its highly automated slaughterhouses, which revolutionized an industry that had not changed much since Upton Sinclair wrote *The Jungle* in 1906. The company built its slaughterhouses in small Midwestern towns near the feed lots where cattle were fattened before being shipped to the stockyards in Chicago and other cities. By eliminating shipping costs and automating highly-paid union meat cutters out of their jobs, I.B.P. was able to compete with such aging giants as Cudahy, Hormel, Armour and Oscar Mayer, and it acquired a commanding 17 percent share of the market. Last year, its profits were $53 million, up 24 percent from 1979, and its total sales were more than $4.5 billion, a figure that places it eighty-first among the Fortune 500 companies. While I.B.P. remains almost unknown to the general public, its revenues exceed those of such household names as Borden, General Mills, United Brands and Kellogg.

During the 1970s, I.B.P., with its ten high-speed abatoirs that could dispatch nearly 17,000 cattle per day, was also slaughtering its competition. The number of meat-packing companies declined by 27 percent, according to the Department of Agriculture, and within the past year, many more packers closed their doors. Feeling the heat, conglomerates that had acquired smaller packing companies during the go-go years of the late 1960s are now rushing to shed them. LTV Corporation (formerly Ling-Temco-Vought) has disposed of Wilson & Company; Esmark (formerly Swift & Company) recently spun off its meat-packing operation as

James Rowen has written for The Nation *and other publications on the impact of mergers, primarily among agribusiness and energy companies. He is currently an economics writer and columnist for* Isthmus, *a paper in Madison, Wis.*

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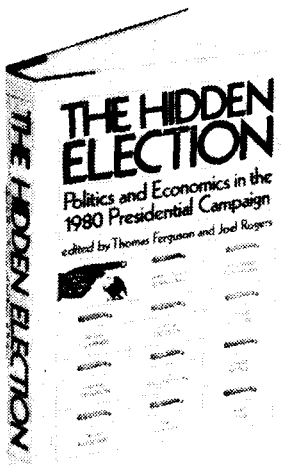
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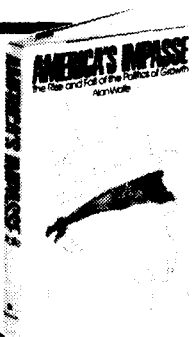

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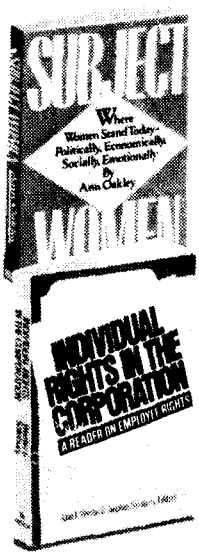
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an independently owned company after several tough years; General Host has sold its Cudahy unit to local management, and Greyhound, according to Wall Street rumors, will soon divest itself of Armour, which the bus conglomerate picked up in 1970.

Meanwhile, I.B.P. surges farther ahead, making more money than all the other packing companies combined, investing millions annually in modernization and consolidating its recently won beachhead in pork slaughtering. And so the sudden sale of a highly profitable company with no apparent dissension within management took Wall Street by surprise. The price was a straightforward $813 million in Oxy stock, and there was no bidding. To understand how the deal came about, one must look at the role of the key player in the entire affair, David H. Murdock, I.B.P.'s largest stockholder.

At 58, Murdock is one of the wealthiest men in America (his net worth before the merger was estimated at $300 million) and a power in the Republican Party (he serves as party finance chairman in California). Along with Victor Posner (Sharon Steel), Warren E. Buffett (the Berkshire Hathaway conglomerate) and Meshula Riklis (Rapid-American Corporation), Murdock is one of a new breed of superinvestors who specialize in buying large blocks of undervalued stock and then either selling high or parlaying their holdings into a controlling position as a result of a merger. Between 1977 and 1981, Murdock acquired 19 percent of the meat-packer's stock for less than $30 million and became I.B.P.'s leading shareholder.

Then came the Oxy deal. About the time that Wall Street's merger mania was at its peak and Du Pont, Mobil and Seagrams were making headlines with their stratospheric offers for Conoco, Murdock called his fellow cattle breeder Armand Hammer, chairman of the board of Oxy. Like most big oil firms, Oxy was awash in cash as a result of the 1973-74 and 1979 oil price hikes, and Hammer quickly grasped I.B.P.'s potential. An Oxy subsidiary, the Hooker Chemical Company, was already making fertilizer, pesticides and other products used in agriculture, so the addition of a meat packer would give the parent company an even stronger position in the production and distribution of the most basic human resource, food. As Oxy president A. Robert Abboud told *Business Week* shortly after the merger was announced in early June, Hammer believes that "food shortages will be to the 1990s what energy shortages have been to the 1970s and 1980s." If scarcity and panic buying should push beef prices sharply upward, Oxy and I.B.P. will be in place to profit hugely.

Just how eager Oxy was to acquire the meat company was shown by its offer of stock at 40 percent above its market price. Murdock alone turned a profit of $120 million by swapping his I.B.P. holdings for 2.3 million Oxy shares. The transaction made him Oxy's largest shareholder, outstripping even Hammer. The added revenues from I.B.P. will propel Oxy into the top fifteen Fortune 500 companies by the end of the year and give it control over a significant share of U.S. energy and food resources. With Oxy's huge cash pool to draw from, I.B.P. can only grow fatter, adding mechanized slaughterhouses in the Dakotas, Iowa, Texas and Nebraska and swallowing up smaller companies.

As the smaller packers are lopped off one by one, Oxy-I.B.P.'s grip on prices will tighten. With the number-one beef packer in America in the hands of an oil company whose president is bullish on food shortages in the 1990s, the prices Americans pay for their Big Macs and charcoal-broiled steaks will be set by some of those wonderful folks who gave us $1.50-a-gallon gas. □

THE OLD ORDER ENDURETH

Spain's Fragile Democracy

LUCY KOMISAR

Madrid

"Libra Tejero!" the crowd shouted. "Viva España!" they cried in unison; then, slowly, "Franco, Franco, Franco," as they waved red and yellow flags or thrust out their arms in the fascist salute. Fifteen thousand Spaniards filled the bullring at Aranjuez near Madrid on July 18 to commemorate the fascist uprising against the Republic in 1936. Lieut. Col. Antonio Tejero Molina, who attempted another fascist coup on February 23 when he led a group of rightist army officers and civil guardsmen in an invasion of the Spanish Parliament, was in prison at the time, but he was very much the hero of the day. At tables outside the bullring, pictures of him—even Tejero dolls—were being sold, along with books such as *Zionism in Spain* and *Pinochet: Truth and Fiction* and cassettes of World War II German marching songs praising the S.S. and the Führer.

Surprisingly, most democratic-minded Spaniards weren't worried by the fascist rally. "I had 15,000 people in an election meeting in Almeria—and 300,000 in Barcelona," the 39-year-old Socialist leader Felipe González told me. As a show of strength, the fascists' meeting was a flop, he said. There is guarded optimism now about the future of popular rule in Spain—a feeling that the attempted coup of February 23 will not be repeated, tempered by a recognition that Spanish democracy is fragile.

To ease the pressure, the Socialist Workers Party (P.S.O.E.) has dropped its opposition to the center-right government of Prime Minister Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo. The party's blistering attacks on his predecessor, Adolfo Suarez, had helped drive him from office shortly before Tejero's attempted coup.

There are still danger points. A hard core of ultrarightists in the army, a military spokesman admits, has "little enthusiasm" for democracy. The civil service is dominated by the same *franquistas* who held power under the old regime.

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And the government is too weak to move decisively against the antidemocratic right or to combat Basque terrorism.

The government of Spain today is an anomaly. Virtually all the high-ranking army officers, judges and police officials are Franco-era appointees. There was no revolution in Spain. An old man died, and the successor he had chosen, 43-year-old King Juan Carlos, happened to choose democracy. It took "23-F," as the Spanish people call the attempted coup, to demonstrate five years later that this democracy was not assured.

When they speak of the attempted coup, government officials show optimism tinged with anxiety. "The attempted coup was important but isolated," Interior Minister Juan José Rosón told me, falling almost automatically into an on-the-one-hand-on-the-other-hand manner. "Few are implicated, although they occupy posts that allowed them to carry out the coup. It centers in a small group which is not significant [in the country], though it is important in the army."

The army, of course, is the great unknown. The generals are for the most part loyal, and a new retirement law is creating vacancies that are being filled by men who are more democratically inclined than their predecessors. But the problem lies with the colonels, majors and captains who exercise direct command. Many of them are children of the victors of the civil war. They were suckled on the milk of Francoism, and today they live in tight enclaves on army bases, marry one another's sisters and, despite their low social status and salaries, retain an exalted sense of mission, conceiving themselves as guardians of the state.

Lieut. Col. Manuel Monzón, the army's chief spokesman, has been a soldier since he was 15 years old. He told me, with surprising frankness, "I don't think any soldier is very enthusiastic about democracy. They accept it, but they don't give shouts of enthusiasm. The army respects the King—and not so much the Constitution." In the army museum in Madrid, the civil war room is still dominated by pictures and memorabilia of Franco and his generals, and the Caudillo's scale-model battle plan for the capture of Catalonia is displayed in the center of the floor. The memory doesn't fade. Observers here say that 10 percent of the army favors democracy, 20 percent supported the coup and the rest are conservatives whose deep sense of discipline is based on loyalty to the King. "The King is the greatest factor of equilibrium that we have," said Monzón, and politicians across the spectrum agree.

The civilian right—which consists mainly of the extremists in the fascist Fuerza Nueva, which sponsored the July 18 rally, the publishers of *El Alcázar*, which brazenly called for the coup and is read widely in the barracks, and the wealthy "blues," blue-shirted *franquistas* who finance the movement—plays a curious role. As a political party with only one seat in Parliament, Fuerza Nueva is insignificant. In the 1979 election, the ruling Union of the Democratic Center (U.C.D.) won 34.9 percent of the vote, and the Socialists won 30.5 percent. The Communists received 10.6 percent, and most of the rest went to the "constitutional right" and regional parties.

The power of the far right derives from its entrenched position in the state bureaucracy. The left would like to see a housecleaning of the civil service, but its demands for one have met with little success. "If the left had won a revolution, it would have the right to demand the ouster of the *franquistas*," argued Gabriel Cisneros, Secretary of State for Parliamentary Relations. "It would mean excommunicating all the right—the army, the economic powers, the middle class." As a deputy in Parliament in Franco's time, Cisneros would presumably be included in such a purge.

Although the U.C.D. styles itself a centrist party and can point to the small Popular Alliance, which is dominated by hard-line *franquistas*, on its right, its leaders' ties to the past and to the bureacracy have conditioned them to react timidly to threats from the army and civilian extremists. In this they have the support of much of the party rank and file. At a conference of the Madrid U.C.D., a 48-year-old cafe owner told me, "The army a danger? On the contrary, the army is what maintains peace, stability and well-being in the country." And two of his friends, both actors, agreed that the police were "respectful" and even "afraid to act for fear of being accused of being repressive."

There is only a slight difference between such attitudes and the assertion of Popular Alliance leader Manuel Fraga Iribarne that the government is "overreacting" to the far right and "should devote more attention to E.T.A. [Basque] terrorists." "The problem," according to Pedro Ramírez, editor of the daily *Diario 16*, "is that the guys who say they are the political center identify themselves with the right."

The Spanish judiciary is dominated by holdovers from the Franco era, making it difficult for the government to move against the ultraright even when it wants to. In 1978, Tejero and Maj. Ricardo Sáenz de Ynestrillas, an infantry commander, were arrested for plotting to overthrow the government three weeks before the vote on the new Constitution. Military judges gave them sentences of only six and seven months respectively. Four months after 23-F, police arrested Ynestrillas, who was recruiting a band of fifty men for a coup planned for the King's saint's day, when government leaders and members of Parliament would be gathered at the Zarzuela Palace. A military judge ordered Ynestrillas's release, and though the government used the new antiterrorist law to have him kept in jail, a higher court freed him in July, saying that the plot had not gone beyond the talking stage. Three military men and twelve civilians involved in the plot were also detained and released—hardly a deterrent to future conspiracies.

In July, a military court also turned down the government's request to prosecute about 225 civil guards who had participated in the February 23 assault on Parliament. The left criticized the government for taking four months to prosecute the rebels, but the court apparently based its ruling on an agreement between Tejero and Gen. Alfonso Armada made shortly after the attempted coup. Under the agreement, Tejero had promised to surrender if the guards

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were not charged. The government later renounced the pact, and Armada, who had portrayed himself as a mediator, was arrested for complicity in the plot.

When the thirty-two soldiers and one civilian who were eventually indicted in the 23-F attempt go on trial, the presiding judge will be José de Diego López, a venerable *franquista* who was the police chief of Barcelona during a period of severe repression directed against democratic groups. "The government interrogates the right, and the judges free them," claimed José María Maravall of the Socialists' national executive committee. Interior Minister Rosón responded: "The judges have their criteria. We are respectful of the principle of division of powers."

Some of the officers implicated in the failed coup received only minimal punishments—transfers to undesirable posts and the like. But at least the government's actions against the 23-F plotters appear to have made the military more circumspect. A secretary in the defense ministry said, "In the ministry bar, they were toasting Tejero a month after February 23. They weren't afraid to say it. Now, when you enter a room, they become quiet."

The Socialists charge that rightist civilians have been allowed to slip through the prosecutorial net. "It's hard to believe all the effort of February 23 was not related to civilians, but they arrested only one," said Javier Solana, a Socialist deputy from Madrid. "Who paid for the buses that took the civil guards to Parliament?" asked Nicolás Redondo, head of the Socialist Labor Federation. To which Rosón replied: "There are more civilians seeking destabilization, but for these to be prosecuted, we need proof."

The left acknowledges that the government has begun to act against the violent right. "They had gone about with impunity, taking over streets and bothering people," said Guillermo Galiote, press secretary of the P.S.O.E. national executive committee. "Now there is a special police brigade to deal with them." But the brigade appears to be inefficient. In one incident, youths who had been putting up posters for Fuerza Nueva's July 18 rally threw rocks and a Molotov cocktail at three buses carrying Basque children on a Socialist-sponsored outing. No one was arrested. "I have the absolute conviction that those who were putting up posters in the street are known," said Gonzalez. "It is possible to detain, judge and sentence them, but I'm very afraid there will be no detention." Charging that the government did not act with the same vigor against rightist violence as against the leftist variety, he added, "Even when the president has the political will to do it, the apparatus he has at his disposal doesn't function with efficacy when it fights the extreme right."

The government is concerned about the lack of professionalism of its security forces, which handicaps the fight against Basque terrorists as well as against the far right. Four security officials visited Israel in July for briefings on antiterrorist techniques, even though Spain does not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

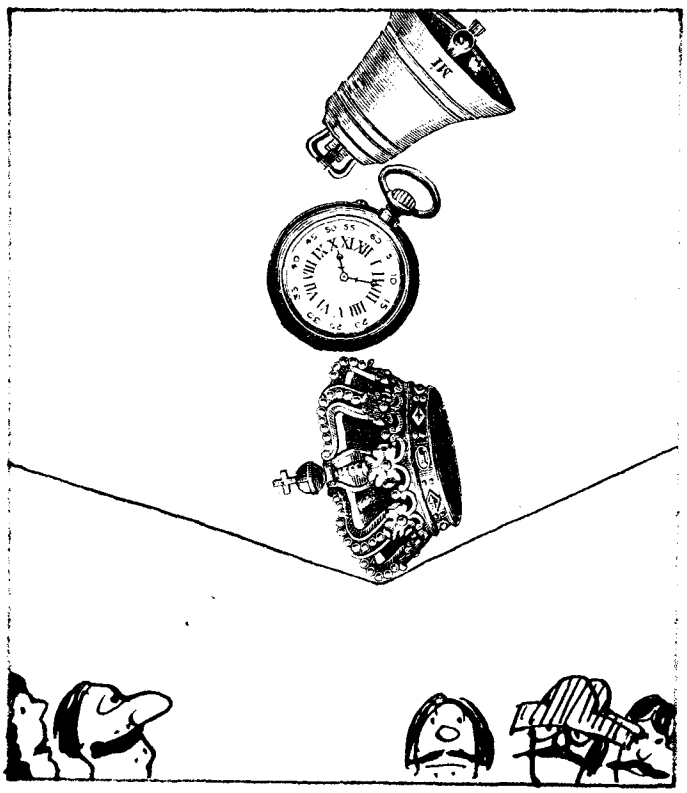
Some security officials cling to the repressive ways that flourished under Franco. Several police officers and civil guards were jailed recently for torturing alleged Basque terrorists to death. An absurd example of persisting *franquista* attitudes was the arrest in June of feminists who were painting a wall with slogans that protested the trial of eleven women for obtaining abortions. They were charged with painting slogans in defense of a crime.

Much more serious were the rightist attacks last May in which a general and six soldiers were killed and the leader of the King's military escort wounded. Soldiers were ordered to their barracks, and military leaders contemplated declaring a state of emergency. Foreign Minister José Pedro Pérez-Llorca told editor Ramírez that the situation was as grave as it had ever been during the post-Franco transition: "I have the feeling that this thing is not working, that they are more angry than ever," Pérez-Llorca said.

No one doubts that in a future crisis, the army would intervene. Current social conditions fuel popular unrest. The economy is weak, with unemployment at 13.5 percent and rising, inflation at 15 percent and an increasingly onerous burden of foreign debt. Lower-middle-class and working-class people at the Fuerza Nueva rally told me again and again that under Franco, at least there were jobs. The fascists have been successful in recruiting unemployed youths by promising them work.

Ironically, some high-ranking army officers did not support the attempted coup because they knew they would not be able to deal with the economic mess if they gained power. The prevailing attitude was, "We are in favor of a coup, but what are we going to do the following day?"

The four major parties—U.C.D., P.S.O.E., Communist and Popular Alliance—spent half the summer negotiating the details of an agreement that divides Spain into sixteen federated states and provides for elections in 1983. The plan will not please the Basque separatists, but if the government



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***In the nuclear industry, nearly everyone reads* Not Man Apart.**

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makes any concessions to them the army will react unfavorably.

Socialist Enrique Múgica Herzog, vice president of Parliament's defense committee and an expert on the military, said, "If Basque terrorists continue assassinating the military, the ultras will use their corpses to push the conservatives in the army to a coup."

The trial of Tejero and the other 23-F prisoners, for which the date has still not been set, will be handled with kid gloves so that the right cannot use it as a pretext for a takeover attempt. Rightists are already spreading rumors in the army that the King at first sided with the insurgents but later backed down.

All these difficulties must be confronted by a weak minority government that is rent by jockeying for power among *franquistas*, Christian Democrats, liberals and Social Democrats. There is a joke going around that the U.C.D. encompasses the entire political spectrum of West Germany.

The P.S.O.E., which received the support of 42 percent of those questioned in a spring Gallup poll, could easily bring down the government and force new elections. But even after the U.C.D. rejected a proposal for a grand coalition, the Socialists continued to mute their opposition. They feared the collapse of the beleaguered government, which would create a vacuum that could invite military intervention. "My job is to insure that the executive power—although it is not ours—is strong enough to defend itself from the attacks of democracy's enemies," González told me.

The Socialists expect to win the elections to be held in 1983, but until then they want the present government to survive. For this reason, they backed a two-year pact between the government and the unions that bans strikes and holds pay raises to a maximum of 11 percent. In return, the government promised to create 350,000 jobs and provide nine months of benefits to all unemployed heads of families, who now get none. The Socialists have also sought to assure businessmen that if they win power, they would move slowly on nationalization. They consider their first priorities to be reforming the civil service, consolidating democracy and halting terrorism. The "revolution" will come later. Indeed, the P.S.O.E. bears a close resemblance ideologically to West Germany's Social Democrats.

Some Socialists fear the army would step in if the P.S.O.E. won. "The [February 23] coup probably didn't succeed because there was a government of the right," said Carlota Bustelo, a former deputy, "but if Felipe González is prime minister, I think there is a risk." González replied, "I don't believe it."

Washington's chief concern about a Socialist victory is the effect it might have on Spain's entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Socialists and the Communists favor renegotiation of the treaty permitting American bases in Spain, and both are against joining NATO. "We are worried about a change in the status quo at a time of international tension," explained González. Curiously, even the army has kept a low profile on the issue. Colonel Monzón called Spain's entry "not very important," though he said it would be good to end Spain's isolation. And Solana acknowledged, "It's hard to know if the army wants to be in NATO."

A recent poll showed that 81 percent of the Spanish people believe in democracy—more than before 23-F. Only 4 percent favored the attempted coup. Of course, a coup doesn't need majority support, but politicians on all sides say that another such attempt is highly unlikely. In February, Tejero and his collaborators sought to convince the army that the King supported them; a future strike would have to be against the King, something that would be "practically impossible for the army," said Solana. Still, for now, the watchword for Spanish democracy is prudence. □

Iron Triangle

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

spending has etched a steadily rising trajectory.

There are various explanations for this phenomenon. One theory, advanced by economists and journalists like Seymour Melman, Richard Kaufman, J. Ronald Fox, A. Ernest Fitzgerald and James Fallows, focuses on the workings of the defense bureaucracy; it posits rival fiefdoms vying for status and power and driven to spend ever larger sums on ever more complex and costly (and often unworkable) weaponry. From different theoretical vantage points, both Keynesians and neo-Marxists reach the conclusion that defense spending serves as essential pump-priming for the U.S. economy. Still others, including a substantial portion of the national security establishment, argue that the defense budget is simply responding to the imperatives of foreign policy and national security.

There is some truth in all of these explanations, but they all omit a crucial factor—the inner workings of the defense policy apparatus, the "Iron Triangle" of the Pentagon, the defense industry and the armed services and military appropriations committees in Congress. This small, incestuous, mutually supportive group decides what weapons will be made, before they are even on the drawing boards in research and development labs. The Iron Triangle sets the priorities that are ultimately reflected in the defense budget.

One side of the Iron Triangle consists of the defense contractors. Through lobbying and sophisticated "government relations," they influence policy and procurement decisions. The defense industry exists in a state of economic dependence on the Federal government, its main customer. The second side, the Defense Department, in turn relies on private industry to supply most of its weapons. The third side, the Congressional committees, approves the funding.

Money, influence and information are the essential ingredients of power within the Iron Triangle. The defense contractors, for example, seek access to the bureaucracy and

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Congress in order both to sway their decisions and to gain vital information. And the information they provide to the planners and the Congressional money men influences their decisions. The triangle preserves its monopoly on information and control over policy through secrecy; it fends off critics of defense spending and blocks legislation hostile to its interests.

Let us step inside this closed world where weapons decisions are made. The process begins with the awarding of research and development contracts. Here, removed from public view and Congressional oversight, industry and the Defense Department devise the weapons systems of the future. Today's multiple, independently-targetable warheads and laser-guided projectiles were once items buried deep in the R&D budget.

A review of the research and development contracts awarded to the nation's eight leading defense contractors—Boeing, General Dynamics, Grumman, Lockheed, McDonnell Douglas, Northrop, Rockwell International and United Technologies—shows that they received $23 billion from the Defense Department and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration during the past decade. In addition, between 1973 and 1978, these eight companies were reimbursed by the D.O.D. for $1.3 billion in corporate R&D investments through a little-known program called Independent Research and Development/Bids and Proposals [see Adams and Christopher Paine, "The R&D Slush Fund," *The Nation,* January 26, 1980].

This program enables contractors to develop weapons that will ultimately be sold to the Defense Department without risking their own money. It means that ideas for new weapons originate with the firms that stand to gain if these weapons are produced. At this crucial early stage, ideas are freely exchanged between industry and government, giving contractors ample opportunity to influence decisions. Major contractors are well represented on the roughly fifty nongovernmental committees and hundreds of subcommittees that advise the D.O.D. or NASA—most notably the Defense Science Board and the scientific advisory groups of each branch of the military. Access to these key committees gives the contractors a further chance to affect new weapons policies long before the public or Congress has even heard of them.

The close ties between industry and government are reinforced by a steady flow of employees back and forth. In the 1950s, Congressional studies revealed that more than 1,000 retired military personnel had taken jobs in the defense industry. In the 1960s, this number rose to about 2,000. Between 1969 and 1974, the Council on Economic Priorities reported, the figure reached 2,000 for the top 100 D.O.D. contractors. A study of the eight leading defense contractors previously mentioned showed that 2,000 of their employees transferred either from industry to government or from government to industry in the 1970s. Of the nearly 500 civilians in this group who moved in either direction during this period, 34 percent worked in the key R&D offices in the Army, Navy, Air Force and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Many individuals circulate at the highest levels of industry and government. Gen. Alexander Haig, for example, moved from the Army to the presidency of United Technologies to Secretary of State. United Technologies employs other government alumni. Clark MacGregor, head of the company's Washington, D.C., office, is a former member of the House of Representatives. Hugh Witt, a government relations specialist, was in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force and subsequently director of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy in the Office of Management and Budget.

Tom Jones, a former deputy program manager for Boeing, became staff assistant to the Defense Department delegation for the SALT talks in 1971, went back to Boeing in 1974 as a program and products evaluation manager and recently returned to the Defense Department. Seymour Zeiberg, appointed Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Strategic and Space Systems in 1977, joined Martin Marietta in 1981 as a vice president for research. Walter LaBerge, formerly Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, is now executive assistant to the president of Lockheed Missiles and Space Company.

This movement and the familiarity it breeds provides contractors with a unique access to the defense policy-making process. *The Wall Street Journal* reported on February 29, 1979, that Boeing had obtained information about plans for a land-based missile from a Boeing employee "on leave to work in the Pentagon's Weapons Research and Development Office." Once the report had been read, its substance was telexed to a former D.O.D. employee working at Boeing's headquarters in Seattle. *The Journal* concluded: "The movement of weaponry experts between industry and government jobs, frequently on the same project, facilitates the easy flow of information and tends to blur the distinction between national security and corporate goals."

A company with this inside access has a major advantage in winning future contracts. As one defense industry official described it: "Your ultimate goal is actually to write the R.F.P. [Request for Proposals], and this happens more often than you might think." As contractors acquire favored access to Defense Department offices and originate specific weapons, all pretense of competitive bidding is dropped. Today, 90 percent of all prime defense contracts are awarded on a negotiated basis.

Once research and development on a weapon has begun, it becomes difficult for the government to cancel it, and defense contractors use the lobbying resources of their government relations departments to keep the ball rolling. The contractors' Washington offices serve as nerve centers for these campaigns. From 1977 through 1979, the same eight leading defense companies employed 200 people in their Washington offices, including forty-eight registered lobbyists. It is difficult to obtain information about the cost of such operations, but according to figures provided by the Defense Contract Audit Agency to Common Cause in 1981, Boeing, General Dynamics, Grumman, Lockheed and

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Rockwell International spent $16.8 million on their Washington offices in 1974 and 1975, or an average of $1.6 million per year each. Rockwell alone spent $7 million from 1973 through 1975.

These Washington offices perform many functions, including keeping track of program developments in the Pentagon and NASA, following the progress of legislation, lobbying on Capitol Hill, handling public relations, funneling information back to the company and handling negotiations with foreign buyers. Virtually all of the nonentertainment expenditures of these offices, including lobbying activities, are billed as administrative expenses on their defense contracts. (And money spent on entertainment that is a legitimate business expense is, of course, tax deductible.) The Defense Department tried to halt this practice whereby taxpayers subsidize lobbying by defense contractors, but abandoned the plan under industry pressure in 1978. This month, the department announced plans to renew its enforcement efforts.

Defense contractors also use political action committees. In fact, according to data gathered by Prof. Edwin Epstein of the University of California at Berkeley, these PACs are among the leaders in spending. The eight leading contractors have channeled more than $2 million into their PACs since the late 1970s.

The biggest spender was General Dynamics, which had total outlays of $500,000; Grumman spent the most on national races—$338,000. The bulk of the contributions went to Congressmen representing states where the companies operate or to members of the defense policy and appropriations committees in both houses of Congress. Congressmen receiving sizable contributions included Senators Strom Thurmond, John Tower, John Warner and Sam Nunn and former Representatives Charles Wilson, Jim Lloyd, Mendel Davis and Bob Wilson. (Bob Wilson is now a government relations specialist in Washington representing, among others, Rockwell International.)

The influence of the Iron Triangle reaches outside Washington into the hinterlands. Defense contractors' employees, the communities where the companies are located, their stockholders, subcontractors and suppliers are all part of the network, and may indeed depend on it for survival. Leading unions, such as the United Auto Workers and the Machinists and Aerospace Workers, have a large number of members who work in defense industries and their locals often follow the company's call to support weapons systems with lobbying in Washington.

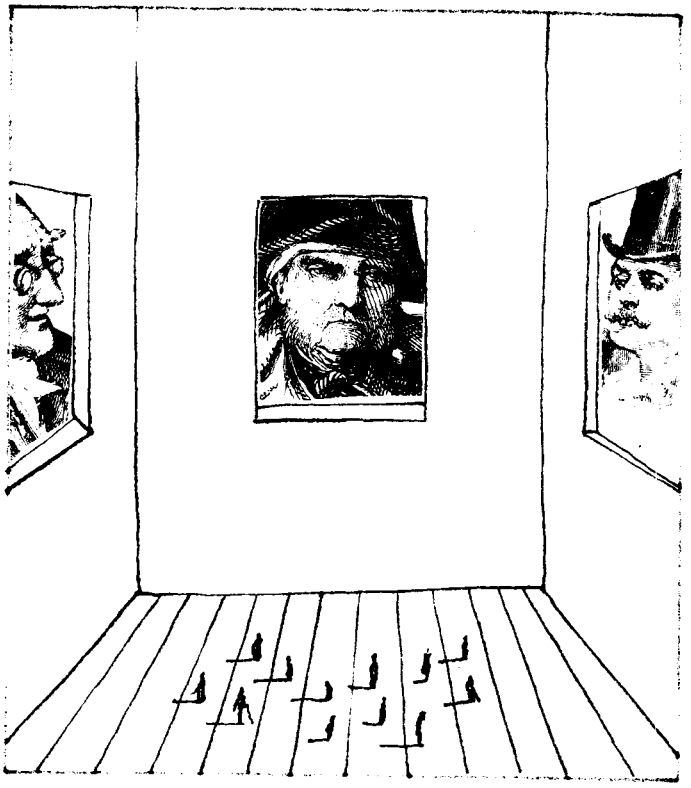
In the mid-1970s, for example, Rockwell International mounted a grass-roots effort on behalf of the B-1 bomber program, which was on the brink of cancellation. The company urged its 114,000 employees and the holders of its 35 million shares of stock to write their Congressmen. More than 3,000 subcontractors and suppliers in forty-eight states were also asked to tell their Congressmen about the adverse impact scrapping the B-1 would have in their districts. Rockwell admitted that it spent $1.35 million on such efforts from 1975 through 1977, an amount that opponents of the B-1 could not have hoped to match.

The interlocking ties within the Iron Triangle, and the steady flow of personnel, resources, information and influence through it, create a community of interest in which it becomes almost impossible to tell who controls whom. In time, Iron Triangle members become prisoners of their own isolation, identifying their private gain with the national interest.

In Congress, members of defense-related committees jealously guard their power over legislation and appropriations, and other members tend to follow their leadership. Other Congressional groups that deal with defense policy have little influence. The Joint Committee on Defense Production, the Joint Economic Committee and the government operations committees in both houses have regularly debated defense and procurement issues but have had little effect on actual legislation and appropriations bills. The Joint Committee on Defense Production was abolished in 1978 as part of committee reform in Congress, and its functions were absorbed by the banking committees, eliminating an important forum for discussion of alternative approaches to defense procurement policy.

Within the executive branch, resistance to the power of the Iron Triangle is minimal. The Defense Department's Office of Economic Adjustment, which was set up to help communities adjust to base closings and contract terminations, has limited authority and little influence over procurement decisions. The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency has become a weak reed.

Even David Stockman recently found it almost impossible to cut defense spending because of the Iron Triangle's clout in the White House. His Office of Management and Budget has final say over the budget requests of all agencies save one—the Defense Department. The department can appeal



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to the President, who frequently overrules the O.M.B. As Philip Hughes, former Deputy Director of the Budget Bureau (O.M.B.'s predecessor) put it:

> The most relevant consideration is, in blunt terms, sheer power—where the muscle is—and this is a very power-conscious town, and the Secretary of Defense and the defense establishment are a different group to deal with, whether the Congress is dealing with them or whether the Budget Bureau is dealing with them.

The development of the Iron Triangle has blurred the traditional arm's-length relationship between business and government in the defense sector. Now we have a situation in which, according to Murray Weidenbaum, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers:

> The close, continuing relationship between the Department of Defense and its major suppliers is resulting in convergence between the two, which is blurring and reducing much of the distinction between public and private activities in an important branch of the American economy.

Under the Reagan Administration, the Iron Triangle has enjoyed a resurgence. Debate prior to making informed choices among weapons has been all but abandoned in an unrestrained burst of spending. Effective cost control, difficult in the best of times, is disappearing altogether. The defense budget grows monolithically with no thought given to its potential impact on inflation, capital supply and employment. National security is equated with whatever the Defense Department and industry demand.

The Iron Triangle must be broken. While the suggestion by John Kenneth Galbraith and others that the defense industry should be nationalized is sound, it is not realistic at this time. Short of that, the debate must be opened up and more information on defense contracting made available to Congress and the public. Committees in Congress now excluded from the Iron Triangle can and should assert their right to contest defense spending that impinges on their own legislative programs. A true, open political triangle needs to be built—one that combines a concern with social needs and economic health with a properly defined national security and defense policy. □

Central America

(*Continued From Page 429*)

U.S. tolerance of the training camps in Florida for Nicaraguan exiles seeking to overthrow the Sandinists.

Thus, tempers flared last month when the United States announced that it would conduct joint military maneuvers with Honduras off Honduras's Atlantic coast. The joint maneuver, called Halcon Vista, took place October 7 through 9 and involved 130 U.S. troops as well as an assortment of patrol boats, reconnaissance aircraft and amphibious landing vehicles. The Nicaraguans have also claimed that the United States is constructing a military facility on a small island in the Gulf of Fonseca separating Nicaragua and El Salvador, a charge the United States denies.

Retired U.S. Air Force Col. Samuel Dickens aggravated an already tense situation by declaring in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, at the beginning of the exercises that they were "a sign of North American military support of Honduras in case they go to war with Nicaragua." Nicaraguan officials, including Ortega, mistakenly thought Dickens was a U.S. representative to the Inter-American Defense Board; actually, he is affiliated with the Council on Inter-American Security, a private right-wing think tank based in Washington, D.C.

What happens in El Salvador will be crucial to future relations between the United States and Nicaragua. On one hand, the United States believes that it can defeat the Salvadoran guerrillas by cutting off their arms supplies; for this, they believe, Nicaragua's cooperation is critical. The Nicaraguans, on the other hand, fear that a prolongation of the Salvadoran conflict might lead to a regional war that would isolate the Salvadoran rebels as well as Nicaragua against the hostile armies of the northern tier nations, and possibly the United States. Indeed, about the time that Ortega was taking the Salvadoran peace initiative to the United Nations, President Romeo Lucas García of Guatemala was concluding a brief visit to San Salvador, during which he conferred with Salvadoran military leaders on what Guatemalan Army Chief of Staff Gen. Benedicto Lucas called "coordinated action" to confront "leftist guerrillas backed by Cuba in Central America."

■ The Reagan Administration's election plans for El Salvador received an embarrassing endorsement last month when Maj. Roberto D'Aubuisson announced that he had formed a new political party called the National Republican Alliance and that he would be its candidate for president. D'Aubuisson was relieved of his post as chief intelligence officer of the National Guard in the 1980 coup that overthrew Gen. Carlos Romero and has since been the head of the U.G.B. (White Warrior's Union), El Salvador's most active right-wing death squad. In May 1980, he and a group of coconspirators were arrested for attempting to overthrow the government; documents seized at the time and released by former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Robert White implicate D'Aubuisson and his associates in the assassinations of Archbishop Oscar Romero and leading Christian Democrat Mario Zamora. Since then, D'Aubuisson has been barred from the United States as a "threat to security," and Salvadoran police have orders to arrest him.

Nonetheless, D'Aubuisson travels the hemisphere with apparent ease. He entered the United States illegally in July 1980 and held a press conference under the auspices of the American Security Council at their Washington, D.C., headquarters, and he flies in and out of El Salvador from his exile in Guatemala using the private landing strips of coastal sugar plantations. His brother-in-law, Chepe Munguilla, collects "donations" from Salvadoran business leaders to fund, among other things, D'Aubuisson's attendance at the Buenos Aires meetings of the World Anti-Communist League—an unsavory coalition of neofascists from Japan, Korea and Taiwan; European neo-Nazis; Cuban exiles; hardliners of the Southern Cone, and ultraright Central Americans like D'Aubuisson.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Wolfe at the Door

MICHAEL SORKIN

FROM BAUHAUS TO OUR HOUSE. *By Tom Wolfe. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 143 pp. $10.95.*

What Tom Wolfe doesn't know about modern architecture could fill a book. And so, indeed, it has, albeit a slim one. *From Bauhaus To Our House* is an unoriginal, if vicious, account of what Wolfe finds wanting in modern architecture and modern architects, particularly what's wanting in their clothes and complexions. Here, for example, is Le Corbusier: "a thin, sallow, nearsighted man who went about on a white bicycle, wearing a close fitting black suit, round black owl-eye glasses, and a black bowler hat." And here is Louis Kahn:

> a gray little man . . . not much to look at. . . . He was short. He had wispy reddish-white hair that stuck out this way and that. His face was badly scarred as the result of a childhood accident. He wore wrinkled shirts and black suits. The backs of his sleeves were shiny. He always had a little cigar of unfortunate hue in his mouth. His tie was always loose. He was nearsighted, and in the classrooms where he served as visiting critic, you could see Kahn holding some student's yard-long blueprint three inches from his face and moving his head over it like a scanner.

Wolfe's argument, such as it is, is that a cadre of badly dressed émigrés conned an innocent America into accepting an architecture of diabolical ugliness and discomfort. This was accomplished through the takeover of such key institutions as the architectural schools at Harvard and Yale, where the hypocritically antibourgeois ideas of the Bauhaus were foisted on several generations of students who have only lately discovered what hit them. Of these ideas, the most insidious and un-American was the notion that everyone should live in simple, undecorated buildings, "worker's housing," the very apogee of all that is unattractive. In Wolfe's account, such architecture was the product of the pseudoprogressivism of early European Modernism, which he seems to feel was no more than a kind of inverted snobbery. In a studied series of set pieces, Wolfe presents various dissembling Modernists in the act of sneering at all we presumably hold dear (colors, decoration, a decent chair), dismissing it with the phrase "how very bourgeois," which, in line with the book's dominant and energetically applied religious metaphor, is repeated with catechistic regularity.

A curious thing about this account is that it essentially accepts the Modern movement's view of itself. Hate it or not, Modernism seduces Wolfe at the first premise, leaving him entirely convinced that architects really were behind all those troubling changes in the environment. Architects have historically suffered the delusion that building is the major factor in shaping society. Only logical. Architecture provides a physical description of social relations, ergo it invents them. Wolfe buys this hermetic view, arrogating to architects the power of which they have always dreamed; he seems incapable of reading in buildings any messages other than those explicitly imprinted by the designers themselves. But are the endless, dreary glass office buildings and penitential public-housing projects simply the irresistible realization of Walter Gropius's pathetic polemic? Are no other forces at work?

Modern architecture triumphed not because a few émigrés managed to dupe a class of clients gone totally supine or because of the abiding credulity of Americans hopelessly drawn to any idea presented with an accent. Modern architecture triumphed because it fit both the expressive and the functional requirements of those who built it. It may have been invented in Europe, but we sure were ready. Those buildings were the cheapest you could build and as replicable as the Model T. They were as anonymous as the bureaucracies they housed. And they fit anywhere. Modern architecture didn't conquer America; it was the other way around. With a particularly American genius, Modernism was stripped of its naïve and hopeful ideological apparel and reattired in a business-as-usual suit. A vision of housing that, for all its tedious simplicity and blind hostility to cities, was intended, however arrogantly, to liberate the poor from their dark, tubercular slums was transmuted into an instrument of subjugation and discipline, a more hygienic ghetto. Was Gropius responsible for this? I think not.

Wolfe does have an unerring eye for the easy mark. Zapping Gropius for his politics is a little like attacking Brooke Shields for her conversation. The point is that it's *easy*. For Wolfe, though, the worst invariably becomes emblematic of all. If you can point out Gropius's feebleness as an ideologue, why mention Hannes Meyer or El Lissitsky? The same standard can be applied to buildings. Why look at Alvar Aalto or the Amsterdam school when you can trash everything with Gerrit Rietveld's Schroeder House? Why mention Ronchamp when you can bop Corbu with Pessac? Why talk about Kahn's Kimball Museum when you can dismiss him with the Yale University Art Gallery? Indeed, why describe Kahn's inspiring teaching when you can get him for shiny sleeves, a childhood scar or reading plans like a scanner? Following his preconclusion that architecture is merely the built word, Wolfe feels relieved of the burden to look, his eyes following merely where his Selectric leads them.

Wolfe's own values spring from a position slightly to the right of Diana Vreeland. For him, politics is fashion, and Wolfe knows what he likes and which side he's on, never mind that his idea of class struggle is a freshman-varsity scrimmage. But Wolfe's position as the apostle of bourgeois taste becomes more tricky when he gets around to the current architectural scene. Consider this description of Robert Venturi, an architect he lumps with the mass of Modernist pariahs:

> Venturi's academic credentials were excellent. He had studied architecture at Princeton and was on the faculty at Yale. Like his friend Louis Kahn, he had also studied for a year in Rome as a fellow of the American Academy. In fact, Venturi was the classic architect-intellectual for the new age: young,

Michael Sorkin is a writer and an architect.

COMING SOON An essay by Gore Vidal: "*Some* Jews and *the* Gays."

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Photo: Bob Adelman

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slender, soft-spoken, ironic, urbane, highly educated, charming with just the right amount of reticence, sophisticated in the lore and strategies of modern architecture, able to mix plain words with scholarly ones, historical references of the more esoteric sort—to Lutyens, Soane, Vanbrugh, Borromini—with references of the more banal sort—to billboards, electric signs, shopping centers, front-yard mailboxes.

Irony, sophistication, Yale? Why, how very bourgeois! Indeed, how very Tom Wolfe.

The apparent muddle here—the bourgeoisie as its own worst enemy—is resolved on two levels. First, objectively speaking, the idea of a fashionable, well-published, nonbourgeois American post-Modern architect is as ridiculous on its face as the idea of a working-class orthopedic surgeon. One can scarcely suggest such a thing without goring someone's oxymoron. Second, however, one must remember that Wolfe has built his reputation by being a little naughty. If he is not exactly prepared to betray his class, he is at least ready to tattle on it. Thus, when it comes time to actually defend something, it turns out to be Morris Lapidus, John Portman and Ed Stone, those architectural Liberaces. Likewise, Wolfe affirms his affection for Thai silk pillows, zebra-striped upholstery, gold leaf and a few *chotchkies* around the house. Such is the slippery apostasy of the bourgeoisie that it betrays, but only a little. The haut bourgeois affects the tastes of the petit. We go to Morey's but we drink our beer from the bottle. How very petit bourgeois!

Finally, Wolfe's book falls flat for the banality of its conclusions and its open contempt for its subject. Of course, any polemic hectors the facts into line. Wolfe bludgeons them and then asphyxiates what's left under an ooze of prose. Maybe because the material is so far from his sympathies, Wolfe's familiar flash turns into a whine. To be sure, he delivers just about everything from his old catalogue of devices: the demon appositives, the peppy repetitions, the surfeit of particulars, the hyperbolic comparisons, the vaguely taboo lingo, the exclamation points, the *frisson* of near-brushes with serious subjects. But the cleverness is only intermittent, the point hackneyed. Tom Wolfe is a great one at the snobbery of being less of a snob than thou, at playing nobody's fool. Nobody's fooled. □

The Wisdom-Writer

DONALD WESLING

THE MAN IN THE BLACK COAT TURNS. *By Robert Bly. The Dial Press. 62 pp. $10.95.*

Robert Bly's previous book, *This Tree Will Be Here For A Thousand Years*, a far slighter work than his new one, was the occasion for a memorably brutal attack on the poet, his work and his many admirers by Eliot Weinberger [*The Nation*, November 17, 1979]. "A windbag, a sentimentalist, a slob in the language," Weinberger called Bly. And again: "Not since Disney put gloves on a mouse has nature been so human. . . . A festival of the pathetic fallacy . . . wistful and cloying . . . this utterly safe, cozily irrelevant poet." This flinty account, unusual in American reviewing for its being entirely negative, showed Bly as the Robert Frost of his generation, pushing a faint Modernism further than any poet ought on sheer charm of public presence.

In the interests of polemic, Weinberger neglected Bly's work as translator, editor and critic; and in his remarks on Romanticism, on the relation of poetry to politics, on the relation of American poets to audiences, he committed a number of oversimplifications of his own. But no matter, for the attack without mitigation is what keeps the review current. Bly himself has been a fierce reviewer; he has, for example, called James Dickey "a huge, blubbery poet, pulling out Southern language in long strings, like taffy, a toady to the government." Since, in his critical prose, Bly has urged young writers to take out after established ones, he wouldn't want his own work to be exempt.

This is pertinent to the new book, because the last (and best) poem has inscribed in it an image of the reviewing relationship. Bly describes going on his knees, peering into a culvert, seeing sky and lake out the far end of the tunnel. Here is the second half of the poem:

I have seen this lake before . . . it is a lake
I return to each time my children are grown.

I have fathered so many children and returned
to that lake—grayish flat slate banks,
low arctic bushes. I am a water-serpent, throwing water drops
off my head. My gray loops trail behind me.

How long I stay there alone! For a thousand years
I am alone, with no duties, living as I live.
Then one morning a feathery head pokes from the water.
I fight—it's time—it's right—and am torn to pieces fighting.

"Kneeling Down To Look Into A Culvert" divides its speaker into two persons and times, the ordinary, present-day self and the water-serpent, which must return to be ritually murdered by its more highly evolved ("feathery head") heirs. By degrees the second self comes to dominate the poem. It seems to me a successful poem in the rather rare genre of archetypal memory, original because it shows the perspective of the parent who will be replaced. By analogy, the reviewer is to the text as the child is to the father—an executioner.

Conceivably the reviewer is also a collaborator. Who knows whether Bly reads Weinberger, and who cares? Nonetheless, there are changes in both style and subject matter in *The Man In The Black Coat Turns*. Weinberger had laughed at Bly's obsession with the theme of the Great Mother, and the new book, more as a completion than as a radical change, meditates on the theme of male grief, the relation of a man to the father he will replace and to the son who will replace him. (The book is dedicated to the poet's son.) Weinberger had condemned Bly's inaccurate or unsequential imagery, his inability to conceive the line as a unit of musical measure, his tone of "numbing sincerity"—and the new book does make improvements under all these headings.

Until recently (he has started talking about "grounding the poem in sound"), Bly spent a lot of energy refusing to talk about tone and poetic technique, insisting that the function of

Donald Wesling has recently published a book of prose poems, American Sentences: The History of West Seneca New York *(Black Mesa) and a critical study of* The Chances of Rhyme: Device and Modernity *(University of California).*

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writing was to lead to something beyond, to "inwardness." In his practice, this limited the range of his experiment to the production and association of images—images which (for him) succeeded precisely where they refused their existence as words. To some of his readers, if not to him, this neglect of the medium of language still seems a real impediment to his development as a writer. This is acutely so for those of us who admire Bly's Quaker-like or Oriental quietness, his ability to leap from the homely to the scholarly, his gentle defamiliarizing of ordinary objects, his sense of family and his new book's inquiry into male grief and the dilemmas of a failing patriarchy.

Bly's work thus raises the question, which cannot be answered here, of whether a poem can morally individuate its experience without a style that makes language new. Of the twenty-four poems in this collection, I would say three are among the very best Bly has ever done. These are the one quoted earlier and two prose poems, "A Bouquet of Ten Roses" and "Finding An Old Ant Mansion." Three or four others are admirable work, and the remaining eighteen poems are subject to Weinberger's strictures or those that follow herewith.

For all Bly's attempts to wean readers from the unecstatic usual, his own poems are to quite a high degree predictable. Every poem in this book is written in the present tense, making for a plenitude of *this-this-this* immediacy but reducing the chances for reflective memory of the past and imaginative projection into the future. Many poems use the "we" of general humanity, with Bly obliging us to feel with everyone else: "We walk, the glass/mountain opens, we fall in." But what if one of us doesn't fall in? As in any book of Bly's poems, you can expect undistinguished phrasings such as "torn to pieces," "clamber out of sleep," "the walnut of my brain," and habitual lists—the names of colors, states of the union and months of the year. Those familiar cues of Bly's favorite inwardness, "black," "dark" and their cognates, are here—by my count, there are twenty-five occurrences of "dark" in this book. One poem, "Eleven O'Clock at Night," is cliché from start to finish. At least three others vault to the opposite difficulty of runaway, unconnected imagery.

Plainly, here, the coherence of the imagery must be a special test of merit, since little else interests this poet. The brief poem "A Sacrifice in the Orchard" moves from the man with the Roman nose on the roof to thousands of moles crossing the lawn, to grief-stricken parents, to a blue raft, to goats, to men in the branches who are apples, and so on. Illogical leaping imagery can be magnificent, and Bly manages it in the water-serpent poem and others. But unintended nonsense is always a mistake.

Some of these poems do grow by rereadings, which discover hidden connections between images. The poet who can write this sentence knows a good deal about his craft:

> And these open places are where the ant legions labored, the antlered layers awakening, antennae brush the sandy roof ceilings, low and lanterned with the bullheat of their love, and the lively almsgivers go forth, the polished threshold passed by thousands of pintaillike feet, with their electricity for all the day packed into their solid-state joints and carapaces.
>
> ("Finding An Old Ant Mansion")

With this as our evidence, why not admit the rather flat truth and risk the reader's yawn? Bly is an attractive character, winning, gentle, opinionated, uneven, incapable of masterpieces but hitting on some good small things because the work is less limited than his ideas of what it should be.

Perhaps the best way to regard Bly is as a preacher or wisdom-writer. This book shows wisdom in its attempt to take up the great untouched subjects of fatherhood and replacement. The wisdom is rarely delivered in complete poems, but the parts are often fine enough, as in the poem that opens, "Today, lonely for my father. . . ." Oddly, Bly's prose poems in this set seem to be more thoughtful and coherent than the ones set up in lines. Stranger still, and here my own feathery head pokes up, Robert Bly is consistently wilder and wiser about human experience in his interviews, published last year as *Talking All Morning* (University of Michigan Press), than he is in any of his poems. □

THE SKY SNAKES

The horizon's grey back grows
meaner, the mowing
must wait. The hay blade clatter
shuts down as you shift
the tractor into high for the fieldlane.
Over the next rise
Helen waits worried by the yardgate.
The windbreak riots around the house.
You remember a neighbor
kneeling near the grave mounds,
saying the Kiowa called this
the time of sky snakes. Fang
of black wind. A mile southwest
hail eats your beans.
By the shed door
the diesel, dull in the wind,
goes loud in the sudden silence.
The tractor dies. A long coil down
from dark cloud
drifts just above your best acre. Running
for the house you watch it
touch down, the dust wall
forming five hundred yards from the house.
You're yelling Helen
get the cave door key, quick the kids,
get them down.
In the dark hole
with its strong fruit, dangling hams,
you hear the earth moan, the house
go, that neighbor
swear once he came up to nothing.

Bruce Eastman

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POP MUSIC

CAROL FLAKE

Shot of Love

Woe unto Bob Dylan. Since he was blinded by the light and began praising the Lord in 1979, critics have been treating him badly. He had changed his prophet's robes once too often and had become in early middle age a caricature of the tribal elders he had once mocked in "With God on our Side." The cynic who had referred scornfully in "It's All Right Ma" to "flesh colored christs that glow in the dark" was now wearing a rhinestone-studded crucifix. Whither had they fled, the visions of Johanna, Dylan's umpteenth dream?

It had been glorious for the young Dylan to preach redemption, to toss out oblique references to trainloads of fools, to wheels of fire and gates of Eden from the bag of eclectic images he had picked up in his journey across American folk culture. He had been a scrawny Walt Whitman improvising an American destiny, a rakish Rimbaud blurring the landscape into a symbolist's reverie. He had given a mythic resonance to our lives. But to hurl epithets of fire and brimstone at his former comrades like Jonah burped up from the belly of the whale, cursing the fleshpots of Nineveh? It was casting pearls before humanists. How does it feel to be on your own, like a complete unknown? Unlike the Rolling Stones?

How soon they forget, unless you die young and leave a beautiful corpse. A bluesier-than-thou Robert Palmer chastised Dylan in *The New York Times* (September 16) for sinking into a "mire of shopworn homilies," and compared his new album, *Shot of Love* (Columbia Records), unfavorably with *Fire of Love*, a record by a trigger-happy Los Angeles punk band called the Gun Club. Dylan, said Palmer, "sounds tired and somewhat confused when compared to the supercharged drive of the Gun Club," although, condescended Palmer, "one should note that Mr. Dylan is at least 15 years older." Perhaps Palmer felt that Dylan should have borrowed a weapon from the Gun Club and given himself a blast of punk. After all, punk has been a rejuvenating shot in the arm for aging rock critics who were themselves beginning to sound "tired and somewhat confused" until Johnny Rotten et al. came along with a new bandwagon to hop on.

Woe unto Dylan for boarding the slow train bound for glory at a time when it was crowded with flag-waving fundamentalists rather than renegade priests. Dylan found himself in some unlikely company. That train don't carry no gamblers, no ramblers, no midnight tokers and blessed few rock-and-rollers. The soft-strumming Jesus rock that the sons and daughters of the Moral Majority have been swaying to is sickly enough to allow anyone sympathy for the devil. Besides, real rock-and-roll came after the fall and before the flood—it was about temptation and rebellion, not self-denial and salvation. Rock was spawned by the blues, and the blues were born of despair. If a man wanted to become a great blues singer, he sold his soul to the devil—he didn't make a covenant with the Lord. Rock-and-roll was the devil's music, as Little Richard shrieked when he gave it up.

There is a paradox involved in making righteous rock-and-roll; it's like pitching a revival tent on the devil's campground. You won't win many souls, and you surely won't be preaching to the converted. In *Slow Train Coming*, his first born-again album, Dylan seemed to anticipate that by publicly proclaiming his faith, he would be deserted by friends and lovers, yet he still seemed concerned about keeping the multitude. That album was his most polished ever. Unlike Little Richard and Al Green, who decided that turning to the Lord meant leaving rhythm-and-blues to the devil, Dylan's sense of calling meant a change in the message rather than a change in the medium. Like born-again football players who compete with even greater intensity after their conversions, Dylan did not consider himself *hors de combat*. He would put Jesus in his own vernacular, as country singers had. (Remember Bobby Bare's "Drop-Kick Me, Jesus, Through the Goalposts of Life"?) Foregoing the ready-made genre of gospel and avoiding the bland pieties of Jesus rock, he would recast his persona from the same folk-and-blues

Carol Flake, arts editor of The Boston Phoenix, *is at work on a book about evangelicalism.*

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sources he had used in the past.

Perhaps he expected his fans to take up the cross of Jesus and follow as they had taken up the cause of Hurricane Carter's innocence during the Rolling Thunder crusade. But Dylan as disciple of Christ has made few converts, at least in the rock world; his plain-spoken sermons are as strange to his former fans as his sing-song surrealism once was to the establishment in the 1960s. And since, as Max Weber observed, a hero's charisma depends on his constituency, Dylan is indeed becoming a voice in the wilderness. Little did he realize when he sang "You Gotta Serve Somebody" that in choosing between God and Mammon he might have to choose between God and rock-and-roll.

No wonder Dylan needed a shot of love. In *Slow Train*, he merged his own past with the nightmare of history and refused to look back. In *Saved*, the bitterness became exhilaration; the corrosive edge of self-righteousness melted into the wonder and humility of the newly redeemed and the confident jubilation of the elect. But in *Shot of Love*, Dylan appears to be assessing the price he has paid and salving his wounds, as though he has begun looking back in regret rather than wrath, picking through the rubble of memories for what can be salvaged. The album is a shambles—it has that first-take clutter and off-the-cuff delivery of his early albums, but, in general, the effect is careless rather than fresh. If the bitter pill of his conversion was lacquered smoothly in *Slow Train Coming*, here it is unevenly sugarcoated. The female chorus that he used in *Street-Legal* to echo his pronouncements becomes in *Shot of Love* a kind of bubbly chaser to wash down harsh medicine.

In the title song, Dylan insists that the shot of love he needs is not a narcotic—"Don't need a shot of codeine to help me to repent." Yet love is the anodyne; the shot he calls for comes as a booster of faith, an injection of fortitude to jolt him out of despair. Perhaps what he needs is a transfusion. A eulogy to Lenny Bruce—which, he admitted to radio interviewer Dave Herman, took about five minutes to write—is his most dolorous piece of hagiography yet. The song is so bad one wonders how Dylan could keep a straight face while intoning it. It's the kind of thing Bruce himself would have done as a lacerating parody.

As Dylan sings in "Property of Jesus," he's no court jester: "Because he doesn't tell you jokes and fairy tales/You say he's failed to make you smile." In that song, Dylan's faith becomes an identifying label setting him apart—one imagines a T-shirt stigmata, a rubber stamp, a tattoo. He grows defensive as he answers the critics who have "Tattooed my babies with a poisoned pen, mocked my God, humiliated my friends."

The problem with songs like this is not that Dylan has grown tired and confused but that he shouts persecution as he pockets a million-dollar check. His songs have little resonance for the unregenerate—or, I suspect, for most of the "saved." Even the devil's disciples would find themselves clapping to good gospel music. Gospel is participatory; it calls for a chorus of "amens." But Dylan's religious songs are such personal sermons that either we seem to be eavesdropping inside his private confessional or we no longer know where we stand within his litanies of sinners and fools. Dylan is so used to turning his private life into a public epic that he no longer knows where to draw the line. "In the Summertime," for instance, is a lovely private prayer, but it offers no *frissons* of recognition for those who overhear it.

Ironically, the most effective of Dylan's exhortations is "Dead Man," which burns with a fitful reggae beat and dark, almost voodoo-like, incantations: "When will you arise;/Cobwebs in your mind, dust upon your eyes." Rock fans accept the quasi-Biblical mumbo jumbo of reggae because of its exotic origins—and because the music itself, charged with a liberating spirit, is so catchy. We can dance along as ganja-high Jamaican Rastas warn us we're lost in Babylon. But we know Dylan too well; we knew him before. And, as Jesus said, no man can be a prophet in his own home town.

There is a song on *Shot of Love*, however, that takes all of us doubting Thomases and places our hands in the wounds. "Every Grain of Sand" may be the most beautiful song Dylan has ever written; certainly he has never sung another more movingly. The wrath and the rapture are recollected in tranquillity, as Dylan becomes the pilgrim poised at the still point in the turning world: "In the fury of the moment I can see the Master's hand/In every leaf that trembles, in every grain of sand." The images glow with the simple poetry of psalms; one thinks of William Blake's

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"Auguries of Innocence" as well as of Matthew 10:29 and 10:30. As the organ, guitar and sax accompaniment ebbs and flows in the background, Dylan's harmonica flutters like a kestrel in the wind. This is indeed "healing" music, as Dylan told Herman. For a moment, when he sings "I hear the ancient footsteps like the motion of the sea," we can feel the radiance of his faith. □

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Only When I Laugh
True Confessions
Carbon Copy
Continental Divide

Movies, and perhaps especially American movies, have a way of latching onto social problems of some complexity and then not knowing quite what to do with them. The waffling occurs, as I said when writing about *Prince of the City*, because movie makers are in show business and must shape their products to the expectations of a very large audience. It happens also because most films are put together by teams of skilled professionals and do not reflect the convictions of a single creative imagination. All four of the movies I have seen recently are technically impressive—cunningly plotted, skillfully performed and splendidly photographed—and three of them deal with topics of substantial public concern. They are honest commodities to the extent that they engage and beguile you, but not one of them grasps its subject with sufficient resolution to challenge an audience or remain long in its memory.

The problem examined in Neil Simon's *Only When I Laugh* is alcoholism. The victim of this malady is an actress in her early 40s (Marsha Mason), whom we meet as she is emerging, a bit timidly, from twelve weeks in a private clinic. She is driven home by a lifelong friend (Joan Hackett), greeted there by an adoring homosexual (James Coco) and soon joined by her stalwart, clear-eyed teen-age daughter (Kristy McNichol). The future looks at least promising, but, as so often happens to reformed drunks, life sneaks up on her. Her former lover, who has written a play about their tempestuous affair, has found a new, much younger companion; the old friend is suddenly ditched by her husband; the tenderly supportive homosexual is fired from the first decent stage part he has been given in years. The heroine takes a sip of champagne to steady her nerves, and the next thing she knows she is staggering home, bruised and bloody from a struggle with a stranger she picked up in a bar. She is obviously in no shape to have lunch the next day with her daughter and former husband, but, by force of will, and with the aid of dark glasses and some well-cut clothes, she keeps the date and there are smiles of victory all around.

Simon knows about alcoholism; he also knows that a drunkard's chronicle is grim stuff and that he has a reputation to maintain as an entertainer. So he sweetens the tale by drawing on his gift for coining nifty one-liners. Reviewing a recent biography of the British writer Saki (H.H. Munro), Rhoda Koenig remarks that his characters "rabbit away at each other in dialogue wittier and cleverer than that heard across any real-life restaurant tables" [*The New York Review of Books*, October 8]. So do the people in *Only When I Laugh*—in their darkest moments their conversation fizzes like that fatal glass of champagne. It is a device that both entertains and estranges an audience, the characters coming to seem less persons in their own right than agents of their author's gift for epigram. The most memorable line in the film is the heroine's statement to her daughter, "When I grow up I want to be just like you." Given the girl's relentless excellence of mind and spirit, that remark might be taken as a pathetically bitter put-down, but, conditioned by then to badinage, the audience guffaws. Of course, people in trouble do sometimes take shelter behind black humor, but that sort of dialogue, used persistently, turns characters brittle. No one with any experience of booze will take much comfort from the luncheon of hope and forgiveness, but then the whole film seems more clever than concerned.

True Confessions co-stars Robert De Niro and Robert Duvall, two of the most assertive and highly esteemed of contemporary actors. That duplication of drawing power is an old theatrical device—you will recall Bing Crosby and Bob Hope, and, in the latter days of the traveling theater troupes that performed *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, produc-

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tions were advertised as featuring two Little Evas. If you want to see *True Confessions*, plan to get to the theater an hour in advance.

It is a good show; how could it not be with De Niro and Duvall? They play brothers: De Niro is a monsignor of the Los Angeles diocese and the heir apparent to the cardinal; Duvall is a tough detective with a sordid background and a savage hatred of powerfully situated criminals. Des Spellacy, the priest, is interested in raising money to advance God's work (and perhaps his own career); Tom Spellacy, the cop, is determined to solve a particularly nasty murder (and perhaps atone for an old sin of his own). The attention of both brothers becomes focused on Jack Amsterdam (Charles Durning), a beefy building contractor and distinguished Catholic layman.

The script, from a book by John Gregory Dunne, was written by Dunne and Joan Didion; the story is set in the 1940s and is said to be based in part on real events. The two stars—supported by a strong cast that includes Cyril Cusack, Burgess Meredith and Rose Gregorio—are as always hypnotically compelling, and they play characters who are equally strong and similarly vulnerable to the sin of pride. They are humbled by circumstances and their own bullheadedness.

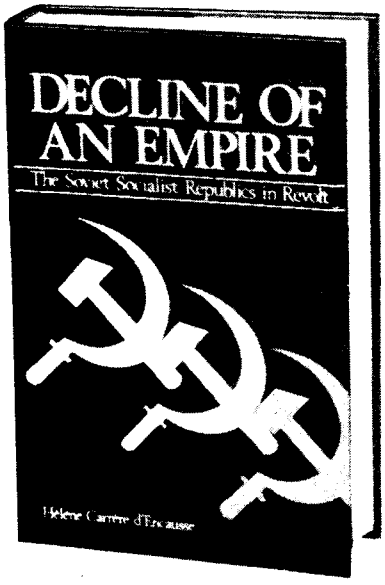
But just how this occurs is obscure. The almost too skillful plot, whose intricacies mesh like the gears of an elegant machine, moves steadily toward a showdown that never happens. Instead, the action jumps forward some years to a sentimental epilogue. The motif of the picture is corruption, and it comes close to saying (there is one saintly figure to serve as a bench mark) that everyone is corrupt—an assertion as absolving as the generalization that we are all guilty of some conspicuous atrocity. But when it comes to the point of assaying the moral positions of the people with whom it is immediately concerned, the movie sheers off, and we are left with the soothing image of the brothers, arm in arm, gazing on the modest burial plot where someday they will lie peacefully side by side.

For all its persuasive verisimilitude, the picture has implausible moments. When, in quick succession, the contractor and the cop enter the confessional to harass the priest, I was forcefully reminded that I was watching a movie. In fact, *True Confessions* seemed as much a salute to old movies as a reconstruction of an old scandal. De Niro and Duvall have been given juicy parts, but they have been juicy for some time. Even the battered hat worn by the cop recalls other celebrated heads. Ulu Grosbard is an effective director, but it may be that he admires what has been done in the past too much to impose his own accent on *True Confessions*. I was gripped by the picture, but in the end it was just another picture.

The problem addressed in *Carbon Copy* is racism, and the task undertaken by its inventors is to treat this ugly subject in intimate detail without becoming oppressively serious or offending anyone too deeply. The film gets away with it rather smartly, but somewhat dulls its scalpel in the process. The method is to cast the hero as a courageous clown and his foes as monsters of hypocritical bigotry. It then resolves his difficulties with a surprise ending that sends us all home as happy as larks. George Segal plays an ambitious Jewish executive who has taken the name Walter Whitney out of respect for the sensibilities prevailing in the world of big corporations and exclusive country clubs where he is thriving at some cost to his self-respect. However, the film is only incidentally about anti-Semitism. Some years earlier, Walter had lived for a happy time with a black woman, and one day—a day that had begun badly for him, with coordinated assaults by his frigid wife and his insolent stepdaughter—a black youth in sneakers walks into his office, sits down at his desk, looks around the room with mocking admiration and says, "Hello, Dad."

Walter doesn't like the boy, who is provocatively unlikable, but neither does he propose to turn his son away. As a result, he almost immediately finds himself without a wife, a home, a job, a bank account, a Rolls-Royce or a credit card. His father-in-law, who is also president of the company, had been keeping Walter on leading strings. Father and son take refuge in a sleazy motel, with pocket change for capital. In adversity they grow closer, though the boy continues to watch his father with ironic detachment.

I won't go into the details of Walter's struggle to survive, but survive he does



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by pluck and pratfall, and when the family repents and invites him home, he waves them away. Meanwhile, to give you a measure of the comedy, he has entered his former home as a masked burglar and raped his more than willing wife. Then comes the happy surprise—young Roger does not turn out to be a nice white boy in blackface, but he is the next most acceptable thing: a nice black boy who is halfway through medical school on a national scholarship. He was only pretending to be an anti-whitey petty criminal to test how much his daddy had really loved his saintly, now deceased, mother.

Segal is routinely good as a cornered worm; Denzel Washington, relatively new to the wonderland of movies, has a charming smile, but seems a little mechanical as the masquerading Roger; Jack Warden and Susan Saint James, as the poisonous father-in-law and wife, appear stunned by the excesses demanded of them. *Carbon Copy* throws a few gentle jabs on behalf of tolerance and brotherhood, and though I am all for exposing bigotry to the light of day, I prefer that it not be quite so foolishly sunny a day. Stanley Shapiro wrote the screenplay; Michael Schultz directed.

Continental Divide deals with nothing that could be called a social problem; it is a slapstick comedy of mismated lovers and its only aim is to roll you in the aisles. I went to see it because it stars John Belushi, who, with Dan Aykroyd, entertained me well in *The Blues Brothers*, and I thought that half the team would be at least half as rewarding. It was more a case of one hand clapping—not much percussion.

The tale, which matches a tough, crusading Chicago columnist against a gloriously wholesome naturalist (Blair Brown) who perches high in the Rockies to spy on bald eagles, is an unusually implausible replay of beauty and the beast, but lacks the grin that would tag it as a parody of such assembly-line crowd pleasers. Not knowing whether to laugh with or at Belushi and Brown, I did little of either. However, the soaring eagles were great. Michael Apted directed from a script by Lawrence Kasdan. □

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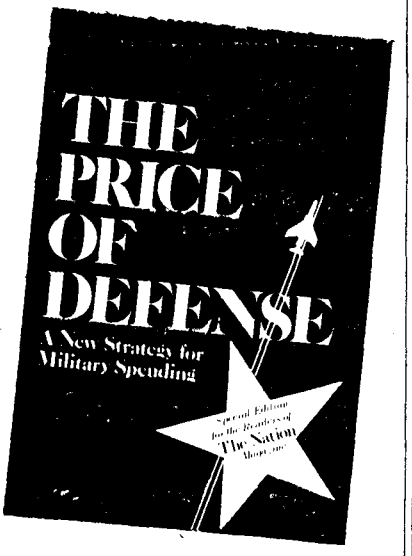

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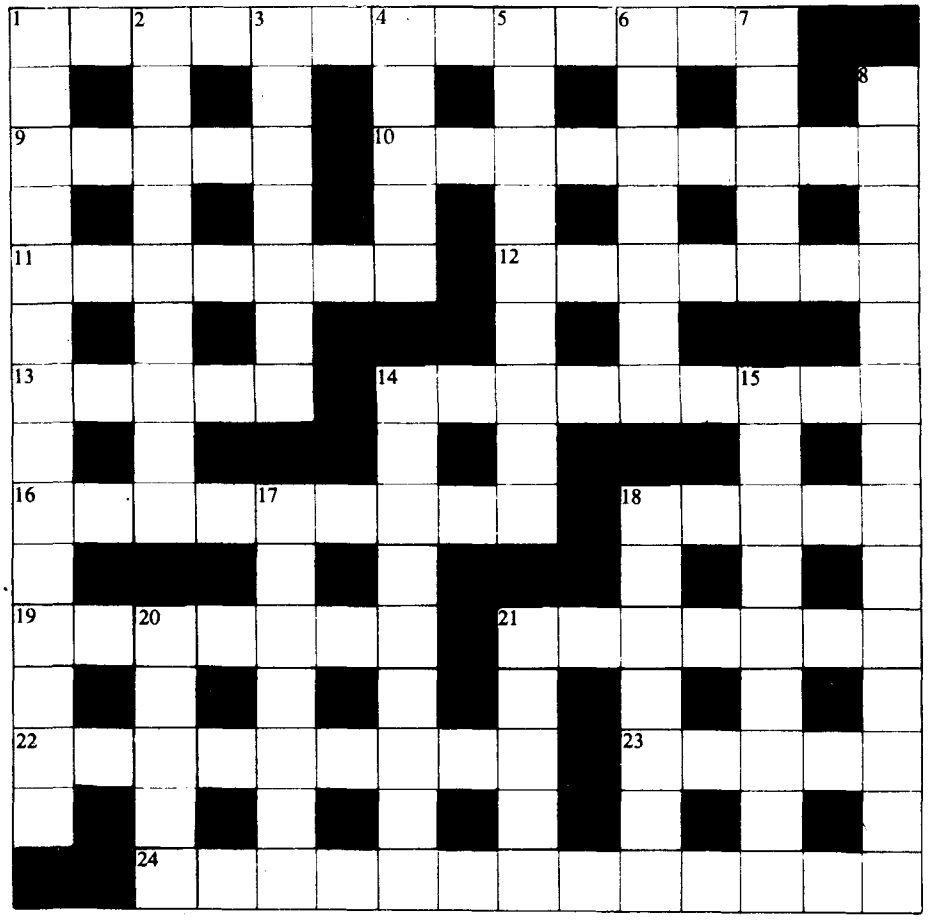

ACROSS

1 Someone like Theda at the money box prepared to give instructions while the act gets set. (4,4,5)
9 Twangy? (5)
10 Not the genuine stage fare, no matter how shocking—possibly due to the wig. (5,4)
11 Money, as some now say, should be very old. (7)
12 One might find other character in Mitty, possibly. (4,3)
13 At least this type of bar should be able to make money. (5)
14 A place to import merchandise as it might seem—but one cheerfully goes along with minor adversity. (4,5)
16 Trying so, a-whirl, a-whirl with them. (9)
18 Fundamental degree, thus. (5)
19 Commonly steals from people when a long-time sleeper leaves. (4,3)
21 One who gets things more safe? (7)
22 Taking things as they come, like a pig with an accent, peculiarly . . . (9)
23 . . . and such a pig was the subject of essay. (5)
24 Part of the main treaty, perhaps. (5,8)

DOWN

1 Disappearing bottle-top if unhomogenized? Some hope to improve with it. (9,5)
2 Mercury, for example, might be essential for communication. (9)
3 Everything in the trial is like Goliath, relatively. (7)
4 How London businessmen rise at the office? Strong men and dancers do. (5)
5 Relatively close contacts? (9)
6 A short broad street runs crookedly, and it's intentionally good paving to something like this. (7)
7 It might be responsible for the rise of Yeats, in a way. (5)
8 One doesn't always like play, but one might tell you where you should go! (8,6)
14 Making a go of it, had what bargainers should show. (4,5)
15 There's nothing to irregular verbs, with the worker being watchful. (9)
17 Did one reputedly take the oath, though you might not like one to stop you on the road? (7)
18 One camel from here might cause disease when around the European capital. (7)
20 A pelican is extremely nutty! (5)
21 This should be good with the 15. (We see more than one on tour, possibly.) (5)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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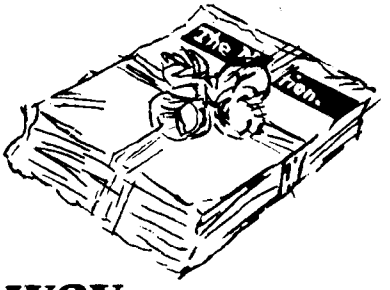

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